










# THE GULF OF YEARS







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KATHLEEN OLANDER IN 1892



# The Gulf of Years:

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*Letters from  
John Ruskin  
to  
Kathleen Olander*

Commentary by Kathleen Prynne

Edited and with a Preface by  
Rayner Unwin

*George Allen & Unwin Ltd*

RUSKIN HOUSE MUSEUM STREET LONDON

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263

A327

First published in 1953

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## Preface

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THERE can be few men whose life and opinions have been more assiduously documented than John Ruskin. It might seem that nothing of significance could escape the net cast by those great editors, Cook and Wedderburn, in their diligent preparation of a Library Edition, thirty-nine volumes in extent, of Ruskin's Works. Every student is indebted to them, and every subsequent study has taken this monument of scholarship as the definitive and authoritative statement of Ruskin's life-work. Cook himself, as a literary executor, had the opportunity to collect together and incorporate any unpublished peripheral material that threw light on Ruskin's character. The partiality of his selection has only in recent years been realized.

The present volume should never have been published by itself. Its place is amongst the correspondence of Ruskin's later years, and a page or two in the last chapters of his biography; for no one who reads these letters would deny that Kathleen Olander was uppermost in Ruskin's mind during the last creative period of writing that he was granted in life. It was to her he turned during the mental darkness of the winter he spent alone at Sandgate, and it was for her he wrote in his elation the epilogue to *Modern Painters* on his last visit to Chamonix.

In the letters that follow, Ruskin takes the initiative in his own affairs for the last time. They are the last moves

in a life that had been full of friendships but was largely denied love.

More than fifty years after Ruskin's death any new biographical material might be expected to receive purely editorial treatment. But Mrs. Prynne, who has held these unpublished letters for so long, is able to provide a far more human and informed commentary than any editor; for she herself was the young art student, Kathleen Olander, whose chance meeting with Ruskin at the National Gallery in the winter of 1887 grew into so sudden and ill-fated a friendship.

The two protagonists tell their own story, and Ruskin would approve of it being told. He was not a man who was ever ashamed of his own actions. When his mind was most full of his past love for Rose la Touche, and his present love for Kathleen Olander, he wrote in his autobiography, "some people have told me I shouldn't say anything about Rosie at all—but I am too old now to take advice." There is little doubt that he would have adopted the same course with Kathleen if he had been spared to bring *Praeterita* up to that date.

Although he was not shy of revealing his affections, those who survived him at Brantwood were more reserved. Kathleen's letters to her Maestro must be presumed to have been destroyed, and Cook, who corresponded with Miss Olander in the course of preparing his edition of Ruskin's letters, persuaded her to destroy three of the letters in her possession that contained criticism of Mrs. Severn. The remainder he examined, and suggested that if she was willing to destroy them all he would mention her in his book. She refused to part with the letters, and consequently her name has never appeared in connection with Ruskin until this day.

In recent years much has been written about Ruskin

to prove or disprove some interpretation of character or events. It is to be hoped that these letters will not be read in the light of any such controversy. Nor should they be treated indulgently as the irresponsible writings of a sick man. To one who inquired about his condition after an early attack of mental illness Ruskin replied, "the only trustworthy evidences of my health are my writings." During the year of the present correspondence Ruskin was still busily at work: *Praeterita*, the epilogue to *Modern Painters*, and many letters, both to Kathleen Olander and to other friends, that were written at this time bear no evidence of more than transient periods of derangement. Between such attacks Ruskin was vigorous, both mentally and physically. The days of his lucidity were numbered, but until the final collapse in Paris in December 1888 his recoveries had been complete.

The mental disturbances from which Ruskin suffered intermittently after 1878 have often been read into his conduct whenever the eccentricity of his actions or the vehemence of his opinions have disquieted the commentator. But before the final collapse the attacks, though violent, were of limited duration, and were noticeable, as Ruskin himself knew, by their effect on his ability to think or write rationally. During the period covered by this book Ruskin suffered one major attack of mental illness and occasional moods of depression; but the great majority of the time he was as buoyant, outspoken, affectionate and alert as ever.

Young people as well as his contemporaries venerated him, and chance meetings often resulted in lifelong friendships. One such young enthusiast, Sydney Cockerell, has recorded a pen-portrait of Ruskin, when at the age of twenty he first visited him at Brantwood.

He was fairly tall but his height was already diminished by a little hunch in the shoulders. His hair was dark, long and thick, his beard iron-grey. His head was of the long type. His forehead sloped, and on each side, between his temples and his ears, there was a noticeable depression. He had heavy eyebrows and the bluest of blue eyes. Their colour was repeated with a difference in his large blue neckties. . . . His hands were small and delicate. . . . He wore very old-fashioned clothes—trousers and double-breasted waistcoat of homespun and a long dark coat. Round his neck was a gold chain attached to his watch. His smile was kindness itself, his voice sometimes almost caressing. He could not quite pronounce his r's.<sup>1</sup>

Such was the man whose encounter with Kathleen Olander that same year led to so sudden and passionate an affection. The meeting was unpremeditated, but no one who has studied Ruskin's thoughts and fears during the eighteen-seventies and 'eighties will find it surprising. The memory of Rose la Touche, whose premature death in 1875 denied him even the hope of the young wife he desired, never left him. He brooded on each moment of the love that had been achieved, and every possibility of felicity that might have been. In letters to his friends he often speculated on the rectitude of his conduct, and whether by acting differently her life might have been spared. In the letter from Francesca Alexander quoted in this book we find one of Ruskin's most sympathetic confidantes struggling to quieten his imperious conscience. He could neither forget nor forgive himself for her death. Her memory was hallowed, and like a reliquary he carried a rosewood casket of her letters with him on all his travels.

<sup>1</sup> Viola Meynell, ed., *Friends of a Lifetime. Letters to Sydney Carlyle Cockerell* (London, 1940), p. 30.



It is not surprising, therefore, that when, after a twelve years' vigil, he found in Kathleen Olander so many of the qualities that he had revered in Rose la Touche he did not hesitate to give her his affection, and confirm his old devotion with fresh love.

Kathleen Olander was young, serious, deeply religious, and an eager, talented student of art. She found, as Rose had found, that Ruskin's faith lacked her own tranquil confidence in Salvation and the love of God, and she determined to build it up. Old age had calmed some of the rebel in Ruskin; he no longer tilted, as he used to with Rose, against strongly urged Evangelicalism. He was amenable to Kathleen's earnest efforts on his behalf. His fundamental belief in God had returned, though sectarianism and the social abuses that resulted from the religion practised around him never ceased to enrage him, especially any hint of salvation by Faith alone. Renewed belief did not bring with it quietness of mind. In his mental turmoils Ruskin wrestled with diabolic forces: in his lucidity doubts oppressed him. The Roman Catholic Church offered him shelter, and his friend Cardinal Manning was not alone in looking on him as a likely convert. Ruskin's faith, however, did not mould itself into established categories; it was upheld by principles of beauty and moral law, and catholic only in its eclecticism.

In his later years Ruskin made many friends, and their company and correspondence became more precious to him than he would ever have believed possible when his parents were alive. Young people he loved especially, and would often try by endearments and shared enthusiasm to gain their trust and affection. It was not salaciousness but the urgency of old age that led Ruskin to cut away the formalities of human relationships. To Frances

Graham he was "always making a curious sort of love": "My darling Kate," he replied when Katie MacDonald first wrote, asking him to accept the Papa-ship of "The Friends of Living Creatures": "Darling Kathleen, There never was such a sweet as you are," he wrote only some ten days after meeting Miss Olander.

To older persons he was often just as affectionate, and to Kate Greenaway in particular jokingly extravagant. He even invented a rivalry for his regard between her and Sorella, in which both parties obligingly played their parts. Ruskin's friendship with Kate Greenaway was one of the most notable of his later life. They first corresponded in 1880, and after her first visit to Brantwood in 1883 she gained the confidence of Ruskin's ever-watchful cousin and guardian, Joan Severn. Many meetings and many hundreds of letters ripened the friendship; but neither with her, nor with her "rival," Francesca Alexander, was there a hint of a transition from playful affection into love.

Love, as Ruskin half knew, carried with it the seeds of destruction. He hesitated and hinted, but Kathleen Olander was innocently obtuse. She, and none of his other friends, could in Ruskin's view release the "seal of a great fountain of sorrow" that Rose's death had stored up within him, and which at the time he predicted would "never now ebb away."

He was abroad when he proposed to her, visiting for the last time Venice and Chamonix, his "two bournes of Earth." Every scheme he had suggested to bring Kathleen nearer to him had failed; he cannot have been surprised at the failure of his greatest plan of all. But the disappointment was intense, and proved a last burden to an over-taxed mind. The journey home was dark with foreboding, and at Paris Ruskin collapsed. Mrs. Severn

came to retrieve him, and for the last decade of his life sheltered him from all faction, decision or choice in his home at Brantwood.

The effect of such a tempestuous friendship upon Kathleen Olander can be imagined. Her parents' action alienated them from her affection. She found herself with few people to turn to for sympathy or advice. An innocent, private relationship with a man whom she looked on as a spiritual guide became, overnight, a matter for censure, prohibitions and innuendo from those around her. She was bewildered and ill-informed about the storm that she had created, and to her parents must have seemed irritatingly steadfast to her ideals. But they wished her to recant from an evil that she could not comprehend as evil, and erase from her mind an influence that has not left her yet.

Not until after Ruskin's death did Kathleen Olander marry, and the bundle of letters that was returned to her at that time has never since been out of her possession. All of them are written on the Silurian Grey notepaper that Ruskin favoured, in a firm hand, and with that characteristic punctuation that is more emotional than grammatical. Every letter is reproduced here in its entirety, and only when an occasional slip of the pen might disturb the reader has any departure been made from the holograph.

With Kathleen Prynne to tell her own story the part of an editor is small. The notes that are grouped at the end of the book are designed both to correlate certain of Ruskin's opinions with comparable views expressed elsewhere in his works, and as an aid to the identification of persons and events. Although they are ancillary to the text of the book it would be ungracious not to mention the debt they owe to the Library Edition of

Ruskin's Works.<sup>1</sup> Amongst a quantity of peripheral material that has been published, the biographies of Cook and Leon, one old and one new, may be singled out for particular mention.<sup>2</sup> I also wish to express my gratitude to the Ruskin Literary Trustees for their permission to publish these copyright letters.

R. U.

<sup>1</sup> E. T. Cook and Alexander Wedderburn, ed., *The Works of John Ruskin* (Library Edition, 39 vols., London, 1900-12). Hereafter referred to as *Works*.

<sup>2</sup> E. T. Cook, *The Life of John Ruskin* (2 vols., London, 1911). Hereafter referred to as *Life*.

Derrick Leon, *Ruskin, the Great Victorian* (London, 1949).

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## The Letters

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*I left school when I was fifteen, and for some years had been attending classes at the Bedford Park Art School. On days when there were no classes I would often spend my time in the National Gallery copying pictures, and after the gallery had closed return to my home in Acton by way of the Art Library at South Kensington, where I became familiar with the critical principles contained in Ruskin's works and Stopford Brooke's commentary on the Liber Studiorum.<sup>1</sup>*

*One day, late in 1887, while I was copying Turner's The Sun rising in a Mist, it was mentioned to me that Mr. Ruskin was in the gallery. On students' days many distinguished visitors used to come, and many young artists sold their copies to them. As I had just been reading Modern Painters I was particularly interested, and my curiosity led me to ask the attendant whether Mr. Ruskin had left the gallery. He told me he did not know, and I returned to my work.*

*Presently, to my utter astonishment, I saw the attendant bringing Ruskin towards me. I was too confused and embarrassed to say much, but I told them it was a mistake and they both withdrew. When I had time to think, it seemed that I had unintentionally been most rude; so I*

decided to go after him to apologize and explain the misunderstanding.

I had just seen enough of him to know what he looked like, and I found him after a while in the Turner room (The Sun rising in a Mist was not in this gallery, but was hung amongst the Claudes, in accordance with the artist's wish).<sup>2</sup> Seeing my oil palette he asked me, rather gruffly, 'How is it you are painting in oils?' but he consented none the less to come and look at my work.

As we walked back together he grumbled quite audibly about much of the students' work, and declared, as he passed some Constables, that he did not like them and hoped I did not either. I was relieved that he changed his mood when he came to my copy, which was about half the scale of the original and nearly finished. He commended it and said I had great feeling for Turner. I knew enough about Ruskin to realize that this was praise worth having, and it was particularly gratifying as my enthusiasm about Turner at that time was unbounded.

I told him that I had begun to read his books. 'Do you like them because of the way I write?' he asked. 'No,' I replied at once, 'it is what you write that I like.' After some further discussion he offered to make me his pupil, provided I left the Art School, which it was evident he detested.

After he had left I felt indescribably happy. I packed up my gear, gave the attendant a shilling, and wandered into the empty church of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, where I sat in a pew and cried for joy.

My parents, when they heard of my adventure, were equally pleased. Ruskin had given me his address and asked

*me to write, which I did with my parents' knowledge. I received the following reply:—*

Kent Hotel

Sandgate. Monday Evening

Dear Miss Kathleen

You must surely have felt that I was grateful to the chance of fortune that led you to speak to me; and that I was entirely sincere in the praise I gave to your work—and the augury it admitted of your success. And I assure you—I have been wearying for your letter—and wondering whether—any would come.

You need not go to libraries to read my books. I will lend or give you any that you wish to read—but please let me send you—first—some—I mean one or two that I like myself—for I am tired of Modern Painters.

But the first condition of my being able to help you is that you begin to work in the way I have always taught—and I very gravely think that if you will take up landscape earnestly there is an opening now for beautiful design in that kind such as there has not been for many years.

I hope to be in town again next week—and if you would work a little in the Turner watercolour room I can explain at length what I should hope for you, in the association of figure with landscape—at such distances as in true perspective are admissible.<sup>3</sup> And—if you really will be good and read some dull bits of my books, on perspective & shading—I shall not regret the time I spent on them—as I used to do

I like your firm hand—as I liked your gently resolute, and trustful speaking—but just the word I want most to make out,—I can't—forgive my endeavour at its imitation and *please* write again quickly and tell me—what it is!—

By the way, I see you don't cross *all* your *ts*. Such a pretty name as Kathleen ought to have every letter of it faultless.

And with renewed thanks for your trust—believe me

Your faithful Serv<sup>t</sup>

J Ruskin

Tuesday morning. Such a sea!—like Turner's in the Shipwreck— Look here— If its *fine* on Friday I'll run up, D.V. and help you to paint those flounders & haddocks on the beach.—If its not fine I won't come till next week

Sandgate 18th Dec

87

Dear Miss Olander

Can you come to the National Gallery on Tuesday? and ask for me in the Turner Watercolour Room? if you bring your colours with you I could set you a little bit of practice-work which would show me how farther to help you—

Any way—come if you can—if not, send me a line to Morley's Hotel saying what day you would be at work.

Ever faithfully yrs,

J Ruskin

*I went on the day appointed, and he set me one of Turner's little sketches to copy. I had brought a letter, which I gave him to read, telling of my great longing to be an artist. He took the letter from the basement, where we were working, up into the gallery to read. When he returned he was obviously moved, and declared that I had 'made him very happy.'*

*I learnt that he was spending Christmas by himself at Sandgate, but before he left he wrote to my father.*

Morley's Hotel—

My dear Sir

21st Dec. 87

I shall esteem it the highest and best of privileges to be allowed to take some part with you in your daughter's training. Her grace, sincerity—and simplicity of thought and purpose are almost unexampled—in my hitherto knowledge of girls—(and I have had the joy of teaching many good and sweet ones;—but this Kathleen of your's seems to me best of all—)

Will you be patient with me, in putting her back to her Elements—out of these ambitious modern drawing schools?—And will you *please*—not let her go out in foggy days—when she has a cough—? And will you—at your leisure—tell me what your own wishes and judgment are, for her, now, and in future,—I mean sincerely,—whether do you wish her to do all she can, in the competition of this too troublous world—of new Arts and new splendours—or—will you be content that she should be happy—in her own way, and in *your's*? Whatever you wish for her—I am sure that her extrication from the

common groove of the Art Student's work is at once desirable—and I will do everything I can for her, as long as you allow me—and she isn't teased by my strictness in measuring distances and matching colour.

And believe me always

My dear Sir

Your grateful & faithful Serv<sup>t</sup>

J Ruskin

Edmund Olander Esq.

My dear Kathleen

23rd Dec. 87

I was very sorry to leave—the National Gallery—and its students—yesterday and think they needed more of my advice. And I find it's rather duller at Sandgate than I thought. So this is to wish you a brighter Christmas in the West—and to wish—for myself—I won't tell you what, till I see a chance of getting it.

Does your Father ever take a little Christmas holiday himself?— There's a pretty bow window full on the sea and piano and books in it—just left by Mr & Mrs Severn. I keep it and the bedrooms above that I may have command of the sea horizon in storms—and moonlights, & sunrises

But if your Father could run down for a few day[s], with you & your sister—I believe it would set you all up till next Christmas,—the air is so pure—and when it was wet I would come & make you draw triangles and pentagons—and the Signs of the Zodiac—and the belt of Orion and the five stars in Cassiopeia— And other things—that need measuring.<sup>4</sup>



Anyhow—ask your Father to give you a well hinged 2 foot rule; ditto compasses with pen & pencil fitting and a measuring tape. You can't think what a difference it will make to your drawing when you can guess after a little measuring, how far off a thing is,—how much round it is—and how high.

And try, in painting, first simply to get the rich gradation of twilight sky—from violet to vermillion

Can't write more to-night

Ever affect<sup>ly</sup> Yours

J Ruskin

*My father declined the invitation, much to my disappointment; but over a matter such as this I was never consulted, and he considered the visit to be out of the question. It would not have occurred to me to challenge his decision, for I was shy of my parents and never revealed to them any of my deeper feelings or sentiments. They did not suspect, therefore, the complete unreserve with which I could write to my new-found friend.*

*As Ruskin had offered me the gift of all his books, I did not think that he would mind giving me instead a new Bible, of which I was then in need. I asked him for one, and far from finding the substitution uncomplimentary, he seemed genuinely pleased by my suggestion.*

Kent Hotel

Sandgate 26th Dec, 87

Darling Kathleen,

There never was such a sweet as you are!—  
you're enough to reconcile one to the 19th Century

—and its railroads,—(for I should never have seen you but for them)—and of course—its railroad bridges,—but—Heaven forbid I should ever get talking before papa about *them*!<sup>5</sup>

I write to-day to my pet bookseller about your Bible.<sup>6</sup>

Have you ever begun Latin at all? It is really the root of all noble modern *music* and language, and you ought to know your Psalter in it, if nothing more.

Tell me, before I plan more—what *gift* you have for languages—(you must have some you know, or you would'nt so much admire *me*!)—and what practice in music

Ever your grateful & loving

J Ruskin

Sandgate 30th Dec. 87

Dearest Kathleen,

I have got your Bible for you, and am entirely pleased with it myself, though the binding is absolutely plain.

I wait your mother's permission to send it—or have it sent, you.

In the meantime I shall simply write your name in it—with my love—and so put it in the hands of my pet Goddaughter Miss Constance Oldham<sup>7</sup>—at Chislehurst—who will rejoice to look at its maps and notes herself—and will forward it to you when you give her leave—

—And on the day after tomorrow please write to yourself—in your heart—everything you can think

of, that you would like the Author of—M.P.—and  
S of V. & so on to write to you—

And put a cross after it for his signature—and he  
will—stand to every word of it.

And is always,

Your grateful and aff<sup>te</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>

J. Ruskin

*A day or two later he wrote to my mother.*

2nd January 1887 [*sic*]

Dear Mrs Olander

I am so very glad of your letter—for I thought  
you very cross about the Bible! and that I should  
never be able to help, or be helped by—that precious  
child of yours. If you will only let her do—and say—  
just what she likes, it will always be right— There  
are not many I should say so of.—but you have one  
of them.

I am obliged to send the Bible first to my God-  
daughter now—for she's jealous, and insists on having  
one just like it! and therefore on seeing what it's  
like. She and her mother,—(many years now a  
widow) are in the prettiest part of pretty Chisle-  
hurst—and if you would let Kathleen go there to  
fetch her Bible—I think they would make her very  
happy—anyway I leave you to arrange matters  
among yourselves—with one serious word in  
closing—

—No *name*, nor *opinion* of mine will be of the  
slightest use to your daughter.

My teaching might be—and I do not often give it, nor may I be able to give it long.— Neither she nor I are likely to write what her parents should not see—but she ought to be able to say to them—being what she is—Don't *insist* on seeing my letters.

I am, my dear Madam

Ever your faithful Serv<sup>t</sup>

John Ruskin

*I was invited to Chislehurst, and had lunch with Ruskin's God-daughter, Connie Oldham, and her mother. The Bible was presented to me, but Miss Oldham puzzled me by hinting that I should not take things too seriously. I felt that I was far from doing any such thing, although already it had passed through my mind how wonderful it would be to have Ruskin's society, as his secretary perhaps, for I felt myself to be as lonely as he was.*

3rd January 1888

Dear Kathleen

I don't think there will be *any* shade, that is not beautiful—in the light of those morning skies of which you tell me. I have had especial joy in the letter which your Father desired you to write because it comes to me on this day—which is the birthday of the child for whom I wrote the best book I ever wrote, *Sesame and Lilies*.<sup>8</sup>

And I think quite the sensiblest method of finding our way, through what morning mists there may be—some of them adding to the light instead of hindering it—is to set to our work at once.

Your Father has given you a carpenter's rule—  
(Is it 2 ft or a yard long?) Your first piece of work  
is to get an idea of the *look* of a foot—and of a  
fathom, in the height and distances of things,—  
especially of trees,—for all the character of their  
branches, and the beauty proper to that character,  
depends on their scale. Very large trees cannot be  
beautiful any more than very large animals.— An  
elephant is the wisest, &—perhaps the dearest—of  
creatures, but not the prettiest. And for Leviathan &  
Behemoth I would rather that you did not see even  
the wrecks of them at the Brit. Mus.—nor try to  
fancy the monster pines of California.

The Grass of your own England—in its springing—  
is the first of the Graces for you— Then the Wild  
Rose of England Then, her blossoming orchards—  
and her *good* green woods.

I have told Mrs Severn to send you one of my best  
girl-pupils drawings to copy, Liliat Trotter's<sup>9</sup>—in  
the meantime, as I must not make you any more  
presents—buy Kate Greenaway's Almanac,<sup>10</sup> and  
copy whichever of its flower-borders you think  
easiest, and send me the copy to see.— Also—try to  
recollect that morning sky—and to wash in its  
colours quickly, as truly as you can, and send me  
that also to see—and so I rest

Your loving Master,

J Ruskin

My dear Master, is the constant style  
used to me by all pupils—girl or boy.

18th Jan. 88

Very dear Kathleen,

I did not write—because I thought *you* would, again, all the sooner! and I've been—very nearly giving my God daughter a bad scold,—fancying it was her fault that you did'nt.

—You will never write, never feel, nor think—any word or thought for which anybody should scold *you*. But I *have* sometimes to keep that Connie of mine in order—She never writes a short letter herself, when she has a mind for a long one

—But there was nothing in yours that needed answer—It was all true and pretty—and you knew it was so. There was one question about the 5th commandment—which you have answered yourself—by making your Father, and Mother happy in you—from the day you were given to them till now—but look out for yourself the passages bearing on the duty of children to Parents—and those of Parents to children, and they will absolutely explain each other.

—The colour sketches you send a little surprise me—that your Father has not honoured *you* enough to teach you how to draw an arch—a pointed one—accurately with compasses, before you tried to draw one free hand. I send you a Prout Lithograph<sup>11</sup>—of which I want you to draw the right hand half—figures and houses—with very black pencil—to get steadiness of hand.—your outline from the flat, of flowers is steady enough—I can't think why the Antwerp houses are so *unsteady*.<sup>12</sup> The bit from Miss Trotter is entirely nice—but the Kate Green-



away bits must be done completely, in colour: The small almanack is the right book—I gave it you to get you down to the beauty of minuteness,—not microscopic but of fine work. All the greatest painters begin with minute work—the best were usually goldsmiths— But I send you a sepia study of mine, of bolder expression of tree trunks. You have not told me of any measuring practice yet.

And don't outline flowers from the flat any more—but from flowers themselves

And get your Father to teach you to draw a pointed arch.

—And don't leave me ten days without a sign—any more

And I am ever

Your loving Maestro

J Ruskin

21st Jan. 88

Very dear Child

I am more thankful than I can say for all the prettiness—and all the seriousness—and all that is, and all that may be—in your letters—and so don't talk about reproofs any more

You don't send me the size of the picture commissioned:—but if you can find any small *Robson*<sup>13</sup> at S. Kensington, which you think would please your—commissioner—I think you would be usefully happy in working from it

And of your contentment in doing outline and pencilling and arches with both sides even, I hear

with wondering pleasure;—but chiefly of that joy you have in seeing great and good works.

—And if they reminded you of the words “They are Spirit and they are Life” be sure that your own heart is one of those—of which it is written also, “Keep thy Heart with all diligence—For out of *it* are the issues of Life.”<sup>14</sup>

Ever your glad Maestro

J Ruskin

28th Jan. 88

Very dear Kathleen

Your letter is wholly lovely—but it terrifies me lest as you enter more in the world, you should be wounded by cruellest disappointment in your tenderest faiths— You humiliate me in all you say of me—for I believe these late illnesses are all chastisements for not having fulfilled my message truly, and having spoken in pride—bitterness—and dull want of charity. My dear child—keep—in peace—and heaven help you to keep,—this perfect faith in the holiness of God’s children—but do not think of your poor master as one—only as His too disobedient and erring servant

—I can’t write more tonight but was forced to write this

Your sorrowful

J R.

*This letter concerned me deeply. I believe, by this time, I had somehow heard that moods of great distress and*

darkness overcame him, but his hopeless despair in the Grace of God was particularly saddening to me. I was myself, as he knew, in a state of religious enthusiasm, so I took it upon myself to try to show him the falsity of his position, and to bring him to a state of peace and assurance of God's love for him. I copied out two hymns which I sent to him, 'Peace, perfect peace' by Bishop Bickersteth, and Keble's 'A living stream as crystal clear.'<sup>15</sup> I also assured him that I had no fear of what the world might hold for me as I grew older.

When I heard that his illness was mental I was shocked but not dismayed. I gave him all the love and appreciation I could, but his manhood made no appeal to me in the least, and I had no recognition of it until the very end. I looked on him only as a spiritual mentor, who could perceive goodness and beauty more clearly than I, and had dedicated his life to a true interpretation of the Arts.

During the next week or two he sent me many registered letters to forward to certain people, including one to Cardinal Manning. These instructions confused me, and I forget how I disposed of the various communications; but I was glad to receive a short, more cheering letter telling me that the illness had, at least temporarily, cleared.

15th Feb. 88

Very dear Kathleen

I *have* been far from well, and so despondent that I could not write— You saw me in London in a sudden return of energy—which gave me more hope of myself than it ought—and the reaction from it has been mournful. Also I could have told you

nothing that would have given you pleasure in reply to your last letter—except that your drawing was excellent, and that perspective might be more easily mastered for all art needs than by those complex diagrams; but I have not had heart to set myself to perspective diagrams when I was without any good to tell you that you would have cared for. I will try to get something useful done for you this week

Ever your affect<sup>y</sup>.

J R.

[undated]

You blessed sweet that you are, I thought I knew my Prodigal pretty well! but you have shown me more in him—and given me some comfort—such as I never thought to have, more:—but please read this first number of III Praet<sup>a</sup>—it is a strange chance that I have just this waste proof to send you, done with yesterday— You shall have the revise tomorrow—and the two preceding volumes by Monday. But I *do* wonder what you'll say to this!

Your gratefullest and lovingest

J R.

18th Feb.—88

Dearest Kathleen

I am only too thankful for every word in your lovely letters—but I have never—in the best days of my life been able to feel as you do—and now, nearly all hope—except of making the people who care for me still a little happy—is gone from me. I am afraid

I shall only make you unhappy—if I talk about myself at all—but for all sakes sake—*please* go on writing whatever you would like to say to me.

And—for showing my letters—I never wrote word to a girl which I would not have her Father or mother see—but I often plead—as I did for you that they may say any thing they like in their own letters without being revised—

Your's are at present the only great pleasure I have—but they are more than I deserve—except in being Ever your gratefullest

J Ruskin

24th Feb. 88

Dearest Kathleen

This last is a letter indeed!—not but that they're all lovely—only I was so afraid you would give me up for reprobate silver when I could'nt answer as you hoped—and now to get a beauty like this is too delightful. And I can tell you a little of what you asked, *now*—but that must be in a Sunday's letter—to-day I want to know whether you are reading any of the Laws of Fésole, for I need'nt tell you again what I have written in that, and I want you to do your maps on the method of projection described in the last chapter<sup>16</sup>—and to colour them prettily, and I'll really get what I've to say about arches said tomorrow. D.V.—and your drawings returned, and I'm ever your loving—

J R.

26th Feb. 88

Dearest Kathleen,

I am so glad to hear from my God-daughter that *she* also has a beautiful letter from Kathleen. You will find *her* a friend who will not fail nor change,—and I think her cheerfulness and pretty play of sparkling temper will be extremely good for you, in your present state of religious enthusiasm.

What I can tell you of myself is that you must never read my books as if they were the least an expression of personal character, except only *Fors*, and *Praeterita*. The others are *meant*, at all events to define laws of art and work for everybody,—Christian or Jew, Cretan or Arabian; and if I appeal continually to the text of the Bible, it is simply because it is the religious code of England—just as I should appeal to the Koran in writing for Turks.

What I myself believe or feel about it, I hold to be of no manner of consequence: what I allow myself to say of the fulfilment of such and such prophecies I say only as Carlyle would—recognizing the bearing of such passages on the present state of the world.

But you will be perplexed, as you read more of me, (if you do.—)—by the undertone of constant melancholy arising from my own doubt of the Immortality of any Soul, (—except in pain)—which has not “*worked out its salvation*” in the Fear of God.

—For our God is a *consuming* Fire  
—and shall burn up the Chaff with unquenchable—  
(not *eternal*) Fire<sup>17</sup>:—for you cannot make an enduring fire of Chaff,—but *unquenchable* in that (—as

I read the Bible) no oblation nor blood of sprinkling can redeem the souls of the idle—proud—selfish—and good for nothing.

—I put this darkness of my creed before you at once—briefly—in the terror and wide range of it.—but remember that I hold also that millions are saved—(whatever Salvation may mean to each of them)—who have simply suffered innocently in this world, like Lazarus; not because Christ's blood was shed for them—but because their own blood also has been poured on the earth like water.

And it is in this part of my belief that I am chiefly separate from all your joy in the Communion. If I believed it as you do, and felt as you feel—I should be a Roman Catholic at once. It is *only* their doctrine of the Mass that separates me from them—and *that* is certainly by my own fault. But the extreme forms of religious distress into which I continually fall, are manifestly diseased; possibly diabolic, temptations and it is only in having more or less conquered—or passed through—one of them that I am able to write you this letter at all.—or that I can dare to sign myself, dearest Kathleen

Your faithful Servant

J Ruskin

*I was dismayed by what I read in this letter about the nearness of Ruskin's faith to Catholicism, and in my reply—my 'sermon' as he called it—I tried to explain my reasons.*



29th Feb—88

Dearest Kathleen

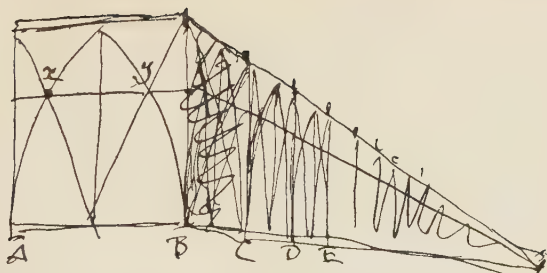
Indeed I should like to have a sermon every Saint's day, and two on Sundays, if they were like this—but, my dear—surely your statement of the things that torment me is just as terrible as my own. It is just because I am one of those flakes of chaff who “with all light and all vision *will* not strive to the ideal set before them”—that I fear the winnowing—

But I will not write more of this today—nor can I much of anything else; but I *must* begin a little of the work your Father trusted me with.

Your arch drawing is admirable; but in artists practice, it is *never* necessary to draw internal arches in perspective; If we get our near line of them pretty



right—the through arches are always best sketched by the eye, for there's hardly ever a bridge or a church aisle but it has chances and irregularities which throw out the rules,—so that all I want of you is to be able to put an arch of given pitch right at a given angle



that is to say if AB is in parallel perspective—to be able to draw the retiring magnitudes B C D & E accurately. My B C was all wrong and this is'nt much better—but you will see its the simplest way of getting the points x y when the curve cuts the diagonals.

If you don't understand I'll do it better.



Ever your loving

J R

1st March. 88

Dearest Kathleen

Let us begin this month well—and try to finish it better!

I return you your two excellent copies. will send you another Prout—and another J. R. next week—but meantime, please tell me, anent the *sky*, where the light is coming from, and if the sun is entirely set. I want to touch it for you, & have kept it therefore

Anent Antwerp.

- A Is there a breeze on the river—or only current?
  - B Is the water clear or muddy? in
  - C either case—of what colour?
  - D What is the crowd opposite about?
  - E Did you never try to draw a boat on the Thames?
- Ever your loving

J R

6th March. 88

Dearest Kathleen

I will do everything you ask me to do, as far as I *can*—but please also—will you do everything of the *little things* I ask you to do *literally*—and simply. When I ask a question—answer it,—and don't make excuses about hours or half hours—or work at home.

I want to know myself, *for myself*, the colour of the river at Antwerp and what the crowd are about? etc.

—I did not at all see how careful and complete your arch perspective is—you have hardly anything to learn in perspective—

I send you back your sky— Answer my questions about that—& send it back for me to touch.

Copy as well as you can—*with no more than the quantity* of work in it—the beginning of a drawing I send you of sunset at Sandgate—in SMOKE cloud of railway on horizon—clear sky above.

Ever your loving Maestro

2. Devonshire Terrace

Sandgate

3rd April

Darling Kathleen

I'm beginning to want a letter very badly. I can't write to *you* just now. I've so much to say;—but you might send *me* a line now and then.

Anyhow, I want one now rather seriously. Do you know—or hear anything of me—from anybody?

I thought to have seen you at the Gallery—but *can't* get up to town yet.

Ever your loving,

J R.

I am keeping well—and doing nice things!

*Evidently he was disturbed lest exaggerated rumours about his health should reach me, and in order that I might not misconstrue his delay in coming to London he followed up this brief letter with a telegram.*

I HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY WELL BUT HARD AT WORK  
AND FORBID PEOPLE TO WRITE GENERALLY PLEASE  
SEND ME THE NEW DRAWING DIRECTLY AND YOU  
MAY TELL ME ALL THATS WRONG IN IT IN A LETTER

J RUSKIN

Sandgate. Friday—5th April

Darling Kathleen

But this is—advance indeed—not a 'step' but an arrowflight, at once.—nay a swallow-flight. I could not have believed you would have made such a

quietly subtle and sweet and right spring—for a year at least!

You have not only little to learn in perspective, but in anything now, except what you will learn every day and hour and minute—with your eyes and heart.

But I don't the least understand how you did this? Is it a copy!—if so, the original must be good—and your's better. Tell me all about it—and please copy the left hand side of Turner's Hornby Castle at Kensington for your next bit of study.<sup>18</sup>

I am so very glad to hear of the new and pleasant room.

But now, my dear, I want a word about the messages I send you for Cardinal Manning. I hope you received them—many of my letters have been stopped of late, and endless trouble and hindrance coming upon me in all sorts of ways.—and at this moment—and for many a day past—I have literally *no* one to help me,—no one who can read to me, or write for me, or be trusted to take a message rightly—my friends—jealous of each other, and careful of me in the *way* that suits themselves—always ready to hinder me from doing, whatever *they* don't like—and the weather has been like the spirits of the abyss risen to do all they can against me. and I have had to fight every thing and every body at once—except you, and—another girl whom I want to tell you about—if only she were able to write to me—but she is'nt just now:—this one help I have had—and that the one that was best for me was in the letter sermons you

wrote me, and in letters I have been re-reading of my dead Rose's. These two have put me back into healthy work, and you shall soon have some to read, & see,—besides *Praeterita*. D.V. But write at once and tell me if you got the Cardinals letter, etc. and how you did this wood-scene. Returned, inscribed,—today.

Ever your lovingest Maestro

J R.

*The woodland scene was copied from a little water-colour bought of an artist who had been painting in America. Ruskin returned it to me with the inscription, 'Beautiful the scene, quite lovely the drawing.'*

Darling Kathleen

But why did you not ask for directions about those letters—I thought you were clever enough to have posted the Cardinal's letter, anyhow!—it is a great vexation to me it was not sent on,—but I meant you to understand some things about him—and me, which I can't write again. I hope to see you at any rate in ten days or so—if only this cold would let me travel.

Ever your aff<sup>ly</sup>

J R.

Sandgate 10th April

Darling Kathleen

I've been writing you one love letter after another, out of my heart,—all dinner time—not in

the least knowing what I was about—or what I was eating—but thinking only how I could make you understand what a gladness, and help and new piece of life you are to me.

The delay in the letters was of no real consequence—perhaps better—as it now chances, than if my impatience had carried the day

I must see you—D.V.—next week. I want to come to Acton to see your Father & Mother as well

I was with some good Christian women this afternoon—Indian missionaries & the like and was happy. Then I got your letter as soon as I was at home again

Ever your lovingest

J R.

Sandgate

16th April. 88

Darling Kathleen

Of course we can have a glimpse, and a little talk in the Turner room—or the Italian—or wherever you like—but I wish I had had the ‘too much’ of a letter, meanwhile. I don’t know how things are going for me at all—sometimes I am quite cheerful in the morning—sometimes very sad by sunset. I’ll be in the gallery by eleven on Thursday, if all’s well. Could you send me a little line to Morley’s Hotel on Wednesday Evening?

Ever your loving & grateful,

Maestro



*I met him in the National Gallery as was arranged, and together we walked about the rooms. I remember being saddened when, after asking him if he prayed, he replied that he had given it up.*

*The following Saturday he attended a private view at the Grosvenor Gallery,<sup>19</sup> and I read with pride of the welcome he had received. 'The next most interesting object, and perhaps the most welcome,' reads a newspaper cutting that I have preserved, 'was the figure of Mr. Ruskin, who, in his familiar fawn-coloured wide-awake and bright blue cravat, wandered with stately step from room to room, the victim of universal recognition.'*

*A day or two later we met again, this time at the South Kensington (now the Victoria and Albert) Museum, but previously he had sent me the following letter, enclosing one written by Sorella to thank him for the gift of a painting by Kate Greenaway.<sup>20</sup>*

*In the months that followed I myself received a number of letters from Sorella; on one occasion, after I had written suggesting that Ruskin adopt me as a daughter, I remember with gratitude the sympathy of her reply to my naïvely impracticable proposal.*

Sunday morning,  
22nd April 1888

Darling Kathleen

*You would have been glad, yesterday to see how many people in the room of the old Water-colour Society, smiled to meet your old Maestro once again; and I feel myself every moment, more and more, how wrong and foolish I have been to*

withdraw myself from so many and dear friends, and break my heart, without knowing what I was doing, upon the rocks of Coniston.<sup>21</sup>

—Your Father and Mother need never speak of any kindness of mine to you— It seems to me just as if one of Perugino's angels had walked out of the frame in a dark frock and told me just what I should do—and where I should go—or stay—and to whom I could be most dutifully and faithfully of use.

I have been thinking much, since I saw you at work on Friday, of those uninteresting commissions—and wondering a little why people can't find more delightful work for you— It seems to me—they might let you choose the things you would be happy in copying, and then choose, themselves, among the chosen. Will you please tell me at what prices you are working, because I did not at all know your real power, and range of power, when first I found you,—and indeed, I never had so able— & so gently submissive and tractable a pupil before: and your Father's trust in me makes it doubly necessary that I should see you do not waste your time and pains. I have far too much in my mind for you, to tell you of.—and the dull Sunday is not a time for thinking *in London*; I meant to have been at Westminster this morning, but was waked at two, and kept long awake afterwards by the dashing of carriages through the square—from some train that had brought the crew of a huge American steamer to London, and I have been forced to rest.

*You know* I am at your command, whenever you care

to see me again—and have got those things to be done at home, off your hands. Today I must write such a lot of letters to people who will be amazed—and some, not pleased, at my staying in London. I've such a number of good reasons though that you need'nt be the least afraid of their finding out this little witch of a reason at the heart of all.

But you must begin to know my Sorella, and she you. Here's a letter for you to begin with. It is a very short one—written lately when I was nearly in despair at Sandgate—but I send it you for the sake of Edwige,<sup>22</sup> her most dear and faithful servant's saying about the windows in blossom on the last leaf. And I should like you at present to keep my sorella's letters for me with little notes of what is pretty in them on dated envelopes.

I can't write a word more today. Ever your devotedest

Maestro.

(of love unwritten, take all you like.)

Mio caro Fratello,

You have a part in all my anniversaries . . . here today, the 22<sup>d</sup> of January, when I felt as if one sad thought must fill my mind the whole day long, your most interesting letter of the 19<sup>th</sup>, and the precious picture, have both arrived. My best thanks for both . . . but I cannot even thank you as I would, because I am troubled, greatly troubled, at what you say of yourself. You have never written me so sad a letter as this; but I am glad that you have

spoken freely to me about the "thorns" to which you only alluded in yours of the 17<sup>th</sup>. You are too lonely, and I can't feel happy or easy until Joanie is with you again, which I hope may be very soon. And I understand, only too well, how you feel about having given pain to Joanie, (have we not *all* felt so, about those whom we love best?) but . . . Fratello mio . . . can't you look on the other side, and think how easy it is, for *you*, to make her happy? Only you must try and keep up your own heart, for she cannot be happy unless you are. I do not know what reason you have for your regrets, but whatever it is, you are in time to make all well for her. It is only when we have those regrets for those who have left us forever, that they seem to be unbearable . . . and yet, we have to bear them, even then! And, Fratello, who do you want to be "out of the way of"? Not her, I hope? Nor me? No, we *should'nt* any of us like *that*, certainly! *Please* don't say such dreadful things as that, any more. The "longing for rest" is natural, (and comes to me, oftener than you would think,) and I do pray the Lord to give you rest, so far as it can be given in this world, and peace, "not as the world giveth". For you are tired now of everything, almost of life; and you do not think of how much your life has accomplished, but only of what it has *not* accomplished (or what *you think* it has not; for I do truly believe that you will see more the fruit of your labours a hundred years hence than you do now . . . no doubt you *will* see it, for what else can the promise mean: "Their works shall

follow them?" . . . and you have sown a seed that will grow. It is not my place to say this, but if you don't see it yourself, I can't help saying it!) But it went to my heart, what you said about your sad awakenings these dark winter mornings, and I want to say a great many things, and don't know how, and can only do . . . what I always do when I can't find words . . . put it all in the Lord's hands, and ask *him* to give you comfort, as I know he will. (*he* understands, without any words.) And I am so sorry that you have felt in any way troubled about the Christ's folk.<sup>23</sup> *We* thought it all beautiful; and I don't think I am sorry that Mr. Allen cut it short, without leaving room for a seventh number, which would have given you a great deal of work in arranging it, just when you want (and I want you) to rest. But I have not said a word yet about the beautiful picture, which is indeed a treasure. The *feeling* of it is very sweet: the thorough sympathy with child life, I have seen in all her printed works; but this has a beautiful, delicate, open air *colour*, which they all, in some degree, lose. I am afraid to say how much I like the landscape . . . because I think *you* think that I don't know much about landscapes, and perhaps I don't; but there is something very pleasant about this one. Once again, I do thank you with all my heart for this most interesting present : . . the only one of her *original* works that I have ever seen. I am going to copy under it the few words which you say about it. And, "you would do better if you could!" So we all would; but,

Fratello, *nobody* could ever be any better to *me* than you are, and I should think even you would know that. And now, I have not succeeded in saying what I wanted to, and I must leave you; but do try not to be so much alone. Do ask Joanie to come to you; or, if she cannot, somebody else. I wish you were not so far away! For I have read through your letter a good many times today, and the more I read it, the more sad and anxious I feel. When you are lonely, remember sometimes that you have a home and a family here, whenever you want them! And now I must say goodbye. It rains today, and is not so cold; but we have been having a long spell of bright, freezing weather, not common here; and Edwige, yesterday, made the extraordinary assertion, that at her house the windows had all come into blossom. As I look over what I have been writing, it looks rather like a *grandmother's* letter; but you must not mind, for I can't help it! When you are in trouble, and I have anything to say, I can't always stop to think whether I am the proper person to say it. I do hope I shall have better news from you soon! But I don't wonder you feel forlorn, all alone in a seaside hotel, in the middle of winter! It seems as if I did not know how to stop, today; but I must. Love from Mammina, and the same from your affectionate

Sorella

Florence

January 22<sup>d</sup> 1888.



*I was copying in water-colour a picture by Faed, What the poor do for the poor, when next we met at the South Kensington Museum.<sup>24</sup> It was not the kind of picture of which Ruskin approved, but it was a commission, for which I was paid nearly three pounds, and I excused myself by calling it a 'necessary evil.'*

*The day we spent at South Kensington was the happiest I ever had with him. I did not paint, but walked around the gallery talking. We went to the restaurant in the Museum for lunch, though we ate little. Rosie, he said, had sent me to him.*

*After I left him I went home rejoicing, loving him with all my heart and soul; for we seemed to find peace in our complete sympathy and understanding of each other. Before we parted he had led me to Turner's Hornby Castle and asked me to paint it for him. I gladly accepted the commission, and was proud to tell my parents about it when I reached home. Their attitude quickly damped my enthusiasm. The sum of twenty guineas that Ruskin wanted to give me for the painting seemed to them preposterous, and they immediately became suspicious. I was to have met him again two days later at South Kensington, but I was forbidden to go and it was arranged that my mother should take my place.*

*I passed my time that day in tears at the week-day service held in the church where I was accustomed to worship. It was scarcely consoling to receive a letter from Ruskin, written the day after our last meeting.*



24th April 88

Darling Kathie,

Its all very well to say the sun's going to come out. It has been deep in, all day for me: but I am happy in my letter and in your being able to say things to me that you can't to any one else and in your caring to be sunshine for me. And I think you saw how truly you were so—while you were 'out.' I've been at Kensington again looking at the Turner, and I see that you can't divide it with pleasure—so you may sketch in the whole of it easily and finish the left hand side down to the bridge—and I'll give you twenty guineas for it joyfully. Mind, the hills & sky and trees are only to be sketched in with light washes; but I hope you'll be there tomorrow and I shall be able to tell you.

And you may say to mama if you like—that I want to know exactly how papa & she have made you the girl you are—that I may put their method first in my abstract of principles of girl education—which is to be my next book—or cream of books already written.<sup>25</sup>

Twilight—and my pen bad & eyes dim—(—for want of sight of you today.)—and I'm tired, and should make you nearly as sad for me as the lord if I went on talking. You will be there tomorrow—? I can't get there till towards noon.

Ever your loving

Maestro.

*After my father had returned from work in the evening I tried to overhear what my mother had to report of her*

interview with Ruskin. From the stairs, where I was listening, I caught very little of the conversation beyond the fact that I was 'romantic' and 'as pure as crystal.' Not being aware of the context I thought this sounded very nice. However, my mother forbade me to write to him any more, and thereby put an end, as she thought, to the friendship.

I went on with my work, sketching out of doors for the most part, but I was intensely miserable and I suppose my parents noticed my depression. Although it was not my chief concern, I was not slow to point out that they had lost me my chance of progress in my career.

Whatever the reason, I learnt one day to my indescribable joy that my parents had changed their minds, and written to Ruskin; but they made the condition of renewed correspondence that only matters concerning Art, devoid of all sentiment, should be discussed.

Of course in my letters I made this too difficult for him, as I was so anxious to get him to think differently on religious matters and efface his terrible gloom and despair. So letters came and went between us as constantly as before.

Sandgate

6th June —88

Dearest Kathleen

I will not try to answer a word of your lovely letter tonight—except only this much—that in sorrow or joy—in strength or in sickness, I am always the same in my regard for you—and gratitude to you—and to the parents who again permit what help I can give you— But I *have* been in much sorrow since last we met, and fear that—

I will not speak of fear, if I cannot of hope;—only be sure that whatever I have said of your own power is true—and every sentence in your letter about what you have been doing lately—under all discouragements—makes me more certain of it

Yes,—if I could come to Acton—how soon I could convince you of this—how happy it might all be—but I do not think there is any chance of my return to London— Will you please ask my Goddaughter about me;—it is probable I may be travelling now for a little time—and she will always have my address whenever you care to send me a letter—

I can say no more, tonight but that I am your loving servant

J Ruskin

Sandgate 8th June

Dearest Kathleen

Never fear but that I feel and understand every word of your letters, absolutely as you mean and wish—I never misread a single sentence—nor have you ever one of mine. —I can only answer thus much today—Mrs Severn, who knows me better than I know myself (in *illness*)—wants me any way out of my surrounding, *here*—and while I am able, to get into the old interest of a French town. Write, Poste Restante—*Abbeville*,—Picardie,

France.

and don't tell anyone else the address<sup>26</sup>  
if I find myself the least able to draw anything pretty  
—I will send it you

I won't write anything to make you unhappy—of either regret or fear—only my thankfulness for having a Kathleen to—think of.

Ever your loving Maestro

J Ruskin

'Weeding the paths,' for your Father is lovely work for you—and you can pull out a weed or two for me, too if you like

On Poste restante letters the main thing is the plain name—no LLD but just, À Mons<sup>r</sup>

Mons<sup>r</sup> J. Ruskin.

I said what I did in my last letter of your *faculty*—because really I never knew a girl yet *but* you who could see how close a beautiful curve came to a st[raight] line.

Abbeville.

19th June. 88

Dearest Kathleen,

I found my old inn here in the midst of a sand heap—for repairs and had to go on to Tréport for a week. I could not leave word at post office, lest your letter might go astray, but the result is that I only got it last night—and am in terror lest you have been thinking I didn't like it—I like every syllable you say to me—but as I wrote to you first of all—can only distress you by speaking of myself—and will only assure you again of my deep thankfulness for all your efforts to help me.—may Heaven only grant that I may not be mere grief to you. I

do take you *wholly* at your word, and would let you bear any burden of heavy thought, if you *could* lighten it for me

This much, of the *kind* of burden I will let you know—that it is the sense of having throughout life—“received the grace of God in vain”.<sup>27</sup> It is not the sorrow but the infinite joy and gift—that have been lost by me—I have grieved and quenched the Spirit—and when I think of what I might have been, and see—as I draw nearer Death—what God meant me, and would have helped me to be—there seems to me no word of condemnation in all the Bible too dark for my disobedience—

I must send this faltering line, not to keep you longer in any doubt of your letters being safe—of the myriad things I could go on lamenting—you can now gather the tenor—Write me yet here a word—please—

Ever your devoted—J R.

Abbeville 27th June

Dearest Kathleen,

You must be content with giving me the gladness of your own letters, knowing them to be gladness to me, as much as anything can be while I remain so displeased with myself. I am writing nothing—and envying—in the saddest way, (I was going to say the wickedest, but it is not that—for I don't wish them to be less able than they are,)—the bricklayers and carpenters and paviours who have their work to show at the end of the day—

and the easy sense of skill in the doing it. You ask me to tell you about Mrs Severn, but you can't be told about her, except by her own sweet face—she has been life and strength to me these twenty years,—and now—I am become—too often—in my fits of illness—only a torment to her. Here is just a little scrap of letter of her's—for you to begin to get an idea of her by.

What between the drying up of my ink—and of my wits—I have no chance today of telling you about anything—only, you may like to know that she and you are the only people I am now writing to at all, & that I am

Ever your loving

J R.

My hand would'nt be quite so miserable if I were'nt afraid of a blot at the beginning of every line—or clause after a dip.

*After this he sent me many of Mrs. Severn's letters to read. These surprised me as they seemed to me too petty and childish to be written to such a man as Ruskin,—sometimes she even wrote in baby-talk.<sup>28</sup>*

*From the very beginning Mrs. Severn did all she could to discourage our friendship. Nothing came of Ruskin's request that she should invite my brother and me to Brantwood when he was abroad: no scheme that required her co-operation materialized. In the end Ruskin himself realized this, though his loyalty to her remained constant.*

*In the three letters I subsequently destroyed at the request of Mr. Cook, Ruskin was outspoken about her interference.*

*In one of my letters I told Ruskin that I had been to see a performance of Cellier's operetta, Dorothy, and how, after hearing the song, 'Queen of my heart,' my little brother, Edmund, had announced that he would make the cat his queen, before consenting to sing the song at home to my accompaniment.*

Beauvais

(Oise) 10th June [should be July]

—88

Dearest Kathleen

At last I have some gleam of good to tell you, about myself,—the extreme fit of melancholy is conquered, and I am getting back into healthy tones of thought, and some hope of being helpful to you. I had both your last letters to Abbeville, but no vestige of pleasant hope with which to answer, until, some three days back, the cloud began gradually to lift—and rose faster as soon as I became assured it could lift at all.

The air here is better than at Abbeville,—and for perhaps 3 weeks to come, you may write here. The story of the little brother and his cat-queen was delightful to me,—(how could you think there was any silliness in it?)—equally delightful to know that you wish I were not so far away. I wonder what you will say if I go faltering on towards the Alps? after my three weeks here.

And if you should go anywhere—the other way?!



I have not given up the thought of Mrs Severn's getting you down to Brantwood. What plans otherwise, have you, later on in this month or in early August. But if you went to Brantwood, you would want your little brother there too, directly—for the fishing! It would be better for him than going to Dorothy! But tell me first if you have other plans.

Ever your loving Maestro

Beauvais 15th July

—88

Dearest Kathleen

I am more than glad of your letter of the 12th—saying your Father & Mother would be pleased by your being at Brantwood—and I have written to Mrs. Severn today to say that I want her to ask you—I'm obliged to be rather cautious, because I'm afraid she's just the least bit more jealous of *you* than she is of my pets in general. but it will be all right when once you're there—and I want you to paint some moss on rocks! and some clear pools in the streams; and the white cloud that stays above the summit of the "Old Man" of Coniston when the North wind blows clear.—If you climb the mountain—take care the cloud does'nt catch you—or perhaps it might carry you away—to Beauvais—which would be dreadful, you know!

This last letter of your's is ever so nice—and I'm not a bit tired of being your Maestro yet. If I *should* find a nice French girl in the Louvre—if I go to

Paris—I wonder if you'd be cross? French (good) girls are ever so nice, too!—I go every morning to buy wild strawberries, and cream from one—and carry back the basket and jug she lends me.

I'm keeping ever so much better and doing really good bits of drawing but I can't send you any yet, for they are notes of architecture.

Ever your loving Maestro.

Love to Mary, too, please.

*Soon after this he sent me a picture post-card of Beauvais and some honey; and to my father he wrote the following letter.*

Hotel d'Angleterre  
Beauvais

15th July. 88

Dear Mr. Olander

I am so very glad that you like the idea of Kathleen's going to Brantwood for a little while: I am certain it will be good for her, and a delight to Mrs Severn, and of course to me;—but, (I have not told Kathleen I was going to ask you), but I wonder if you *could* bring her over here for a week—first? I think you would be more at ease about everything,—and her mother would be so also—if I could have a quiet talk with you—and you would see the way she and I got on—at our lessons!

I have a young architect here with me—having a travelling scholarship, an entirely good and high-bred youth—whom Kathleen would not be at all

the worse for seeing, too—and we are both hard at work measuring, and examining the face of, the buttresses of the Cathedral Apse<sup>29</sup>—work in which *you* could give lessons to us both—

—This is the quietest nicest little French inn that can be—and the air is the most delicious in the world—! and the town quite lovely, and if you came, I don't think you would be sorry—I am here for a fortnight yet—afterwards, I hope, going on to Switzerland—but it would make the Alps brighter to me if I left you in more peace of mind about K—and had thanked you face to face for letting us correspond again

Ever faithfully & respectfully yours

John Ruskin

Edmund Olander Esq.

*My father was as unwilling as Mrs. Severn to take advantage of Ruskin's plans for me. But Ruskin himself was still full of hope; he continued to forward Mrs. Severn's letters for me to read, and on one occasion a sketch of a poodle by Arthur Severn, who had been staying with him at Beauvais.*

Hotel d'Angleterre

Beauvais

19th July 88

Dearest Kathleen

There has been no time yet for answer from Brant<sup>d</sup>.—but I am quite sure, if I remain as well as I have been lately, that Mrs Severn will have no need

to come up to town—and as her boys go down on the last day of this month, with their father, you might go down with them, and be chattered to all the way. It's lucky you are nearer your maestro just now for you couldn't do anything at Brantwood in such summer as this! The moment I've done my work here I am going south—(mind you tell me in your very next letter how I'm to behave in the Louvre!) I've told Mrs Severn that you are *my* preacher in St. Pauls, and that she's to tell you everything I should be preached to about. But I think the Madonna is rather pleased with me lately,—I was up on a highish ladder for more than an hour—the day before yesterday—studying the way she had tied the curtains in a twist round the stable-poles—and I found that she had been taught at school how to wear her peplus like a Greek girl,—which is curious in a Madonna of the Department de l'Oise, in the earliest 13th century

And I have fine times buying cream and raspberries in the market—I carried home a *pound* of lovely dark red raspberries and a lot of cream the other day in two white bowls half through Beauvais

Why don't you ever ask what became of the Antwerp?

Ever your lovingest

Maestro.

Beauvais

Saturday—

Kathleen dear, I've got a plan now which I think *must* come right.—I will allow no film of cloud to

come between Joan & me, because of you,—when once you see each other it will be all right.—but in the meantime,—your Father says he cannot leave town till 4th August—I start for Switzerland on the 1st or 2nd—and will leave my rooms here and what others may be needed—full of books and little pics and things—to help you to study Beauvais— Then—come all—Mama & Papa—Mary, & the fisherman.—There are vineyards here—and aspen avenues and a stream—and a cathedral and such lovely green-grocers shops—and confiture shops—(I've got a little affair on with *such* a nice farm girl in the fruit market—who pinches the apricots for me to see that they're quite ripe— You don't mind—do you?) and such chalk crags—and harvest fields—and it would be such a comfortable thing for me to leave anything I liked safe here—with Kathleen to take care of it—and besides—this horrid weather has kept me from doing my out of door work—and I can leave you five or ten pound commissions at every corner—with trees just like Hornby castle, and the cathedral between And who knows but Mr & Mrs Severn might come here too and—then—

—I can't plan any more—I had no sleep last night for partly pleasant planning—of what you were to do at Brant<sup>d</sup>, but I think here will be ever so much nicer—and the letters which it is so wicked of me to read will only be a day later than they are now

Fancy—I'm going to shell my own pease for dinner today I've just sent to market for a basketful and then I'm going to coax the cook to boil them green—I'm

ever so much better than I was, and writing nice little footnotes (though I say it) to a new number of Christ's Folk, with such lovely stories in it!—but—not sleeping last night I can do nothing better than shell my pease.

*How tiresome that you can't get this till Monday*

*There, I've shelled a lovely little bowlfull—and got up the chef—who is not too old to learn—and told him how I want them boiled without being made greasy—and I'm to have a gateau au riz afterwards And when you come, he'll let you perhaps—go into the kitchen and make marvellous things.*

*Its the cleanest nicest inn that can be, with all sorts of birds in the courtyard—and a fountain for the ducks and a parrot and a squirrel—and singing birds all round it—gay in the early morning*

*—Mind—Brantwood is'nt given up yet—but I do think this would be as nice—*

*I'm so very glad Olive Cockerell has found you out. Her brother has mainly—this last fortnight devoted himself to nursing and cossetting me—and she is a dear good girl— Now I must go to sleep and dream of it all: Your lovingest*

**J Ruskin**

*At Olive Cockerell's invitation I paid her a visit. Her brother, Sydney, who had returned from Beauvais, was also present.*

*Very soon afterwards I went for my summer holiday to Lyme Regis, so that when, on August 12th, a telegram from*

*Beauvais was forwarded to me, I was unable to act upon it.  
It read*

GET THE DRAWING I SENT TO WATERCOLOUR  
TURNER ROOM FROM WILLIAM OLDHAM<sup>30</sup>

JOHN RUSKIN

*Next month, when I returned to Acton, I was able to collect the drawing, which was a charcoal sketch he had made of a frieze, together with a booklet in French, that did not interest me much, about the Département de l'Oise.*

*In his letters of September 19th and 25th Ruskin refers to this packet again.*

Hotel Meurice. Paris

20th Aug<sup>t</sup> 88.

Darling Kathleen

You are never wrong in "obeying impulses"—but extremely wrong in *disobeying* telegrams! You lost me day after day in mere puzzle and debate, when you left that parcel with Mr Oldham—and I don't know to this day, & hour & minute—how much you got and read, and understood of all the documents about the Dep<sup>t</sup> de l'Oise—and town of Beauvais

—You have never got into your head that you are 'in my confidence' and that, if you don't do what I expect of you—I've got to do it myself afterwards, too late!—and that you've put me out—of patience, and out—of heart—and out of—the window, nearly—looking out for letters that don't come—and that I'm very sorrowful—and not the least angry, but I don't know—what the Dickens to do, next!

Haven't you got Arthur Severn's Poodle?



Haven't you got a bookfull of notes and maps and things about Beauvais—and the five towns within hail of Beauvais, and to be got at by rail from the Beauvais station in no time—to call time,—as times go?

Don't you want me to love you—and teach you—and pray for you—and I don't know what more?

—And how on earth am I to teach you—and whats the use of my loving you—at Lyme Regis?

Where am I going next?—? To Neuchatel in Switzerland—and then to Thun—and then over the Grim-sel, and then to Milan—& Como—& Verona, & Venice—and back—D.V. to Chamouni, and to Paris; and I'm just going out now to see if I really can have nice rooms in Paris for the winter—(for Xmas, that is) Of course *you* can't ever come near Paris. It's a great deal too wicked a place for Irish girls, or even girls with Irish names, and no more—than just the least bit of 'darlin'—after them. But you *might* come to Beauvais, and learn to manage a wood fire—and cook an omelette—and sketch a bit of grass?

—Meantime—write me just one line more—to Hotel Meurice—and tell me,—if you mean to be a good girl and do what I bid you—when you can get leave from other people—And I'm your really *very* loving,—Maestro.

Darling Kathleen

Paris. Friday

I am very happy in your letter of the 22nd *I* could'nt think what had happened to you either,—but now you're all right—and coming righter—it is no wonder you have been bewildered. But—con-

sider now if the chief bewilderment be not—your not having made up your own mind, quite, what you want me to be to you? and that unmaking up of mind, again dependent on your not being quite clear whether you are a child—an angel—a pretty girl—or a clever—woman! (What a horrid word ‘woman’ is—the French ‘femme’ is so much nicer!) “There is no place so wicked that you would not meet me in.”—Really? If when I come back to Paris, I were to ask Mrs Severn to bring you *there*. (She’d be too glad to bring you that she might come herself—) Would you come? You can’t think how naughty people are in Paris!—nor what pretty bracelets and brooches and necklaces they wear, to look as pretty as possible! Now, Kathleen,—suppose you were to set yourself to think how you would—dress to look as pretty as possible—in a little box with Joanie and me at the Comedie Française?

Now just be a *little* wicked, for once, and tell me—there’s a dear—and I’ll write you ever such a long letter from Geneva. Of course you’ll have to think a good deal about it—but you may still send me a line *here* to say you *are* thinking. & then—Poste Restante, Geneva, please.

and I’m ever your lovingest

Maestro.

Dijon 29th Aug.

Darling Kathleen

Your letter—if there *was* one—was too late for me at Paris but I shall get it at Geneva: and I

sent you from Paris, the last thing, an old silver waist-buckle nearly as old as Holbein, which I thought very Kathleenish; and a Turkish sash of dainty blue and white, to fasten to it—I thought the sash rather Modern Painterish—and if you can wear them together—I think it should make you feel that you belong to *me*, even though you're at Lyme Regis.

But certainly of late, I've only had your heart—and none of your wits.—For here in your last letter—you coolly tell me again—I'm painting in oil! Now did not I absolutely forbid you to paint in oil? You say I shall be glad that you are pleasing your Father by your work—I am so—but not if it is bad work—And all modern work in oil *is* bad—girls' hopelessly so.

If I did not forbid it you it was my carelessness and inadvertency. None of my pupils are ever allowed with my knowledge—to touch it. It is filthy—lazy—coarse—vulgar—and ruinous to the hand and taste.<sup>31</sup>

I am keeping well—but fearfully teased by everybody I know—Kathleen and all.

—What I want you to tell me chiefly now is whether you love me as much as you did, now you know I've all those sweethearts already? and whether you are quite sure you ought to be first?—Anyhow—if you *will* paint in oil—you cant be! but I'm still  
and Ever, your loving

Maestro.

Write Poste Restante

Genève

Suisse.



JOHN RUSKIN IN 1885



Geneva, 5th Sept. 88

My Kathleen,

I have your two lovely letters, and the third—just a little tiny bit cross, but with its lovely inlaid sentence, “Kathleen will never tease you”—and I have read your text—for yesterday, when I got the letters and the book—and now in the morning for today—and they are both beautiful—and the book itself the best I ever saw in its kind—that is to say with any verse or comment added. Rosie gave me for the same purpose one with the simple texts in their Greek and English.—she taught herself Greek that she might read her Testament—and partly to have more sympathy with me, also—now I will read with both of you. *Her* texts, for the 5th, Fight the good fight of faith—*lay hold on eternal life* and for the—4th—Lord to whom shall we go thou hast the words of Eternal life<sup>32</sup>—come with beautiful fortifying to yours.

—And—my dearest—child—(Do you really like *me* to call you that—though you won’t “answer for being anything more”?)—you have not told me too often that you love me—nor can you love me too much,—if indeed there is the immortal life opening to us both—for you first made me pray for it—and recover the hope of it—nor, even in the life here—can you love me more than I will you—if you choose. I promised you at Kensington that I would love you first of all—*how much*—must depend on your—not running away to Lyme Regis again, when I want you at Beauvais! Not that I shall ever (But)



be 'cross' with you, *really*, whatever you do—even if you insisted on painting in oils!—but—it is a very serious question what sort of love you want! I don't think you yet in the least know. You tell me and most thankful I am to be told—that you have 'wanted' *me*, 'dreadfully' (I think the word is)—since that last Kensington time—So have I you—but not merely that I may explain Luca della Robbia to you— We shall have fine times at Paris in the Louvre—but I shall 'want' some fine times at home, too!—and they won't be all in reading texts.

I *can't* write you a long letter today—at least—not quickly enough for first post—and besides—I've such a host of things to say,—that I'm afraid to say and can't stop to think whether I will or not!—such naughty things, they are—But the main one is—that I think it's a shame you could'nt invent some better way of curing my cold—if you had been at Beauvais,—than merely pitying me—and suffering with me—for which I should'nt have thanked you a bit.

—And so goodbye for—the fifth Sept!—

Write to Sallenches,

Savoy.

France.

I will wait there till I get the letter.

Ever your own—Maestro—but  
much more, Servo,

John Ruskin.



Sallenches. 9th Sept.

1888

My Kathleen,

I have had such sight of Mont Blanc today as I never hoped to have more.—and in truth it is all your doing—I wonder if you will be here with me, next spring! I can't conceive your being—anywhere else!

I was lying awake last night and planning—what you can wear round your neck—It is to be a finest & purest chain of Venice—no gold is so pure—and they make the links so small that the chain looks like the White Lady of Avenel's girdle<sup>33</sup>—but I'm going to have it seven times round; rather tight for a necklace, to show what a perfectly chained and submissive—child—you are! So mind you send me the measure carefully—just above the shoulders.

“A few hours ago I came to you, and saw you—and heard you speak” My Kathleen!—how was this—and how can *I* come and see *you*?

I do weary for my next letter, now. I've got you driven into such a delightful corner—you puss—and with a promise that 'Kathleen will never tease'—I can't draw the Mont Blanc for thinking of it!

*Please* write now to Chamouni and tell me if you'll like the Venice chain

Ever your loving

Maestro

Sallanches. 10th Sept  
1888

My Kathleen,

I fondly thought I had got you into a corner!—and here you are again—all over the world—and up in the third heaven besides—and I'm only your poor maestro who doesn't in the least know—how even to catch you—much less to manage!

I do like that last page about the World, though.—and I think I can trace a wholesome curiosity to know something about Paris, as well as about the third Heaven— And *this* letter must be entirely worldly! There *is* a little romance left in me, old as I am,—and quite your sort of romance—but I shall not have room in this letter—even if its a double sheet—for half my worldliness.

But—before I begin, this must be understood, which I think will please you—that—whatever I do, or ask you to do—shall be determined between ourselves. I will take no advice about it with any one,—not even with my sorella:—you and I will have it our own way, or not our own way, by our own decision —You see—I assume that your way will be my way, and my way your way—and that we are pretty sure—as the world is made, not to *get* it! but to have to take it—if we—resolve that—with God's leave—we'll have it.

To begin then. Its quite settled that—for the present —(don't start—Heaven only knows and rules the Future)—for the present you belong altogether to me—heart—wits and will—and ever so much more than

you *can* belong to your Father and Mother—who are different altogether from you—and are besides bound to give you up to somebody else—some day or other, which I'm not, and don't mean to be—(unless you persist in never answering my questions—and never doing anything I expect you to do!)

That being so,—the instant—and constant question must be, for me— Not what *I* want,—but what *you* do? The more complete the control I have over you, the more I am bound by all duty & love to find out what is good for you—and do *that*, whether I like it or not. What *I* should like,—it seems to me I've told you pretty plainly,—anyhow as you said of what you had more than once told *me*, "I'm not going to tell you again"—(at least in this letter.) But whether what I should like would be good for *you*, is not yet in the least clear to me. I know that you love, your imagination of me—but how far the imagination is true,—is the first question! You've not read the tenth part of my books,—you've never seen me angry, despondent or ill,—you've never—seen me flirting with a Parisian shopgirl—or a Jura shepherdess,—I kissed my hand to one only the other day and made her laugh so prettily that really—she's been nearly as much in my head as you, ever since!—and how it will be when I get into Italy—as I said—"Heaven only knows!"

But—granting that I am or tried to be what you fancy me,—and that you *are* (for no trying could make you) what I fancy *you*—like a Greek girl of the 5th century—B C— (If you're not— Well—

What then? !!!) Meantime—if you would like to know what a Greek girl of the 5th century was like—tell me, and I'll try to describe one to you— You can't see one at the British museum—they've nothing but spoiled Roman copies there—when you come to Paris, you shall see—but perhaps you would like to know before?

Then for the next point! Suppose I made up my mind—that it *would* [*be*] good—for you, as well as nice for me, that you should come—next time I'm like to die of cold—to nurse me—what would be the use of your coming if you could'nt do anything better for me than pity me? You would have to learn to nurse first, and to give up your painting—which I should'nt think good for you at all!

Then the next point is, and a principal—which must be the last for today. Though I am entirely displeased by both your mother's and father's dealing with me—still I am on honour with them, and if I decide on any course of action which they could not approve—I am bound to warn them first. Hitherto I have done—so far as I knew or could, what was indeed *best* for you, their daughter, only—

If I begin to let my own wishes, or interests, weigh either with you or myself—I must speak out first to them—and I certainly will not do that yet—We are both happy in our permitted correspondence—which is assuredly good for us both— I shall write to you much oftener now—and make the letters what they will be glad their daughter should receive—I will write a little list of maestro commandments,

for you to keep in the clasps of your Venice chain! —and you know—I wrote to you—long before the Kensington time, that I would always do everything that *you bid* me,—if it was possible to me. So it is you who have to make up your mind what we're to do —for either of us must obey the one who orders first

I'm afraid this is the most teasing letter you've had—But 'the Master won't tease' when he can *see* you.

I daresay you'll have more tomorrow—I want to use the Lyme Regis day. Write to Chamouni.

Ever your lovingest Maestro

J Ruskin

Sallenches, 11th Sept

88

My Kathleen

I have been all the morning since breakfast, breaking stones in a torrent bed—where I wanted to show granite boulders all over moss and stonecrop and ragged robin. —but I think Kathleen will have to come and do them instead. —I can't paint granite boulders any more, (I find) but I think I could paint Kathleen just a little bit,—if she were sitting very quiet beside a granite boulder!

Then I took to botanizing after stone breaking, and looked at ragged robin, till it seemed as if I had never seen the pretty thing before. Have you ever examined flower after flower, as the crimson point first, and then the crane's bill rises within the petals. I never knew that the texture of the petal was

sparkling before, seen through a good lens,—but I think everything sparkles, since Kathleen wrote me her last letter!

If it is fine tomorrow I am going on to Chamouni at last, where I shall wait till I get another!

Mont Blanc was lovely this morning and I think I'm—a little better; I mean a little gooder than usual.

Rosie's text this morning was—

"He is able to succour them that are tempted"<sup>34</sup>—Your's came just literally of Mont Blanc.

I wonder if you have the least idea Kathie mine, what my worse temptations are?

I've never answered the bit in your last letter but one, about your feeling of powerlessness to do what you wanted—or did I answer—a little?

It is only because you do not yet know how to choose what is well within reach, nor to be happy in the practice of the narrow—but delightful—faculties of the hand.

Time will come when you will rejoice in laying a true touch, as much as a musician in striking a true tone (—For true—read beautiful—in that last line) and already I think you are able to enjoy the beauty of noble painting, as well as of nature, are not you?

Write now to *Brieg, VALAIS, Suisse*. I want a Kathleen letter, one *at least*, at every place I have to stop at. So there must be one at Brieg, one at "Village du Simplon"—one at Domo-d-'Ossola, one at Baveno, (Lago Maggiore) and such a lovely long one at Milan! And I'm your lovingest Maestro

Chamouni

September 16th

1888.

My own Kathleen,

Your first letter from home came to me last night,—and gave me a night of rest indeed,—and a morning of joy such as I never thought to know again—unless after Death. Nor have I faith enough yet to believe, except in your love—and in my own power *yet* to be worthy of it—as you would have me. But the morning rises cloudless over this mountain which has always been a sign of God's love to me—and I *can* trust—today, that all His promises in Him are Yea, and in Him Amen.

My love—there is no way needed *out* of this Corner I have driven you into. There is none possible—to either of us,—for ever—God be thanked— Is it not under the Head-Stone?

There will be more, praying for us, than we two, Kathie,—there are more now, than either of us know—some in heaven, and some on Earth.

And—I trust—that their prayers will be answered—as it seems to me our God does answer really simple prayers—in the sense in which they are prayed.

And in that trust I tell you—that—He granting me life—I will be back in Paris on the day I promised—the Parisians,—1st November of this year. That my Joanna shall bring you there, on the soonest day after that that she and you can come.

And that in Paris,—you shall enter—a world—not wicked—in which God's will shall be done—as in



Heaven, and in which—we both shall be His servants  
with one heart and mind

Do you know the history of the Sainte Chapelle?<sup>35</sup>

Write me one letter more *here*—I will wait for it.  
Then I go on to Venice, to buy you your Chain!  
And I am for ever your loving Servant

John Ruskin

Kathie mine—do you know I had forgotten your  
birthday!—and had never opened that page of your—  
of our—book—till *this* very morning? The beginning  
of an Eternal year—to both of us.

Rosie's text is "The Night cometh when no man can  
work."<sup>36</sup>

I have noticed before that She is bound to give what  
God chooses me to hear of—message before the  
Resurrection. She sent me a curious warning at  
Beauvais, of that illness,—which if I had not under-  
stood as such, *warning*,—might indeed have been  
mortal to me

I will write again tomorrow. —and—Heaven  
helping me, I'll never *tease* you more, as long as I live

Sunday. 16th Sept. 88

My Kathleen,

After I had answered your letter this morning,  
I went to mass, with the Chamouniards,—and then  
had a little walk on meadows known these 40 years.  
(You know *I* was born in 1819, I suppose?)—and

then I came in and had breakfast—such a good one—butter & honey and bread and roast fowl and tea and *cream*. And then I came up to my room, and walked about and thought a little of Kathleen—and other pretty sunburnt creatures and things—besides the White mountain shining in at my window.

14: Well—7 times 14 is—how many? and that, in inches,—how many yards?—I can't have the chain as gossamery like as it *can* be made, for if at any time you *did* pull against the collar ever so little, you'd break one of the seven threads, which would never do. I'm thinking of putting seven clasps on it—besides the real clasp which must admit of less or more tightness.—of course it must be the *full* 14. and go rather close down on the shoulders, that you *may* pull against it if you like! (I'm afraid I was thinking a little how it would look, even at mass!)

Then, I thought of other things and wrote this enclosed bit of finish of the finishing epilogue of Mod. P. as just republished—You have a right to this bit of M.S.—so just please copy it fair and send your *copy* to

Mr George Watson  
Printing Works  
Aylesbury

saying you had directions from me to do so.<sup>37</sup> And he'll send you back—you'll see—anyhow—the *beginning* of the epilogue at once! in print—and all the rest as fast as he can. —and I'm ever your lovingest J R. but cruelly teased about that dream.

Monday morning

‘Watson’ How badly I have written all this—but I was much excited—all things coming so bright at once—and your letter *so* lovely—in its naughtiness

Brig—Simplon

19th Sept. 88

My Kathleen—

(At least—for the present  $\frac{3}{4}$  of Kathleen)—I could not wait as I intended for the next letter at Chamouni—it will be forwarded to me at Milan.—and I hope it will be a little nicer than the last one—For my Kathie, if you’re only going to love me when I call myself a miserable sinner—you’ll never love me but when I’m crazy—for I never have said I never shall say that sort of thing when I’ve all my wits about me—and there are harder bits against Evangelical doctrine in the last epilogue than I’ve said yet.<sup>38</sup> Further, Kathie,—the less you listen to what people say about me, the better—and the more frankly you ask me to tell you whatever you would like to know,—myself—

(N.B. that shepherdess I kissed my hand to, was only 7 years old—or thereabouts—and I should’nt in the least want your leave to ‘go on’ as I do with other girls, if only I had you to go on with! How I *did* want you in a mountain field with the second harvest of hay on it—yesterday!

Write me now a line to Milan—and then another to

Verona. I hope you have got your parcel from the National Gallery.

Ever your lovingest  
Maestro.

*How this dispute arose about 'miserable sinner' I cannot think, as I had been constantly trying to convince him that he was no such thing. I wrote again, addressing my letter to the Palazzo Rezzonico, where he was staying with the Alexanders.*

Write  
c/o Miss Alexander  
Palazzo Rezzonico  
Bassano, Veneto,  
Italia.

Milan, 25th Sept  
1888

I'm so glad you're going to that nice Miss Margaret—but you don't tell me to address there.<sup>39</sup>

My own Kathleen,

That little postscript to the second letter, the 22nd, sends me quite wild with joy—for now, because you can be to me all I need,—so can I be to you— If you had held back, I would have tried all I could to be what you would have had me—but you know—it could only have been—torment as well as joy—not health and peace, as with God's blessing, it will be now— The Sainte Chapelle was built by St. Louis. I wanted you at Paris,—to give yourself to me there—I want you *now* in St. Mark's, quicker, if I can get you anyhow—but now my sorella and I will settle things and meantime I'll write you *such* love letters!—I never had a chance of writing a love-

letter to Rosie<sup>40</sup>—she was always furious with me for loving *her* better than God,—(and I did'nt—but I loved God better for the gift of her,—as of you—whom, the moment I saw, I thought He had sent to me, literally to save me when nothing else could, but Love.) I've been in such pain thinking you were displeased—or that people were coming between us,—I shall not any more now—but I had written the Paris plan in a mysterious way which you might have thought was mere dream. I was getting ill again—the two letters this morning are new life.

—And you *will* be happy with me, while yet I live—for it was only love that I wanted to keep me sane—in all things—I am as pure—except in thought—as you are—but it is *terrible* for any creature of my temper to have no wife—one cannot but go mad—  
—And if I am spared to stay with you—suppose—it were but seven years like the seven wreaths of that chain—you would have many to love you and honour you—when I left you.—I'm not going on to speak of that—today,—but only to rejoice in you and over you—

I will write again from Verona, D.V tomorrow—your two letters following from Chamouni just caught me in time.

Of course the drawing is for you—Is not your name on it?

About the Greek Girl— I hope Kathleen is both Irish and Greek It does, in a kind mean pure—but in its Irish sound—it is better than purity—it is sweetness also—

My real meaning was rather a naughty one—but I must out with it—lest I should tease you—in a real Greek virgin statue—all the lines of curve are subdued—almost severe—especially the lines from knee to ankle—but I don't care now whether you're Greek or English or Irish—I will love you—as you can't conceive, yet—and there will be NO flirting with other girls,—for evermore

Ever—my Kathleen

your loving & devoted Serv<sup>t</sup>

J Ruskin

My love—I *was* NOT hurt by your letter I knew wholly what you meant:—but I warned you that you would find no sympathy in me with *that* division of your mind and course of thought. *All* my teaching is that God shall sever the wicked from the just, as a shepherd sheep from goats—and that we became just by obeying God ourselves not by Christ's obedience for us—and that from Noah, Daniel & Job, down, there are worse and worse—little & less—sheep—who are of less folds—but the goats have their own place. I am sure you must see there are lots of people who need just being put out of Gods way—or they couldn't *be*, anyhow

*In this letter my slow eyes were at last opened to Ruskin's real intention towards me, by the one word 'wife.' It had never once occurred to me hitherto that he would ever look on me in this way.*

*I was not only young in years, but still more so in the knowledge of ordinary life. Amongst Victorian parents mine*

were no exception in bringing me up to marriageable age in utter ignorance of all that matrimony meant and entailed. But for the confidence of a fellow art student my innocence would have been complete. As it was the word 'wife' could not be disregarded, and marriage to me meant children.

I received the letter with dismay. I thought he might have had some plans for me to live with him (on honourable terms of course: I considered his age would presuppose that), but that he should marry me and that I should bear children by him, I thought so scandalous that his reputation would be for ever ruined. So young a wife, I thought, could only impair the prestige he had built up over the years. The very idea seemed ludicrously inappropriate.

Before consulting or telling anyone I wrote a letter to him in great grief, the words of which I cannot now recollect. Meanwhile three more letters came to me from Italy—the love-letters he had promised—which only served to increase my misery.

I now made the mistake of telling my mother what had occurred, and a terrible storm of indignation arose. My parents demanded all the letters that I had received, and I reluctantly gave them up. But rather than let them see the last three love-letters I tore them up before handing over the rest.

As long as Ruskin lived they were never returned to me, though I constantly asked for them instead of presents. Many years later they were handed to my future husband at the time that we announced our engagement.

Meanwhile my parents wrote to Ruskin sternly forbidding him to have anything more to do with me, under threat of



*making the matter public; but still more letters arrived before my parents' intervention reached him.*

Bassano

Wednesday 3rd Oct

1888

My darling Kathleen

I have today your dear letter of 29th Sept—and will answer all your questions tomorrow—I've had to go for a long drive—there is not so much to answer and it is all simple. but this note must catch return post, the longer one I'll send to Gloucestershire—your friend's address is a little uncertain it seems to me—so I shall write to Post Office Stroud—and you need never destroy any letters I write to you I did not think my last would have surprised you so—for assuredly there is only one way in which we can be to each other what we might—only for all things less or more that you wish me to be—I am and shall be your faithful servant—I am grieved to have gone so far from you just now—you might well think the answer long in coming

I hope my tomorrow's letter will make you happier.

Ever your loving servant

J R.

Bassano, 4th Oct—1888

My Kathleen,

I have your grievous letter of the 1st—I will be to you always what you bid—and love you always as you choose—my vain thoughts of what might have

been shall be put far away—forgive me the deeper sorrow they have caused you.

I may tell you that the girl who bore my name never was my wife—I found two days before the marriage that her father had forced her to take me for my fortune—and I kept separate—thinking that in time she would come to care for me. but she did not—and left me as the world knows.<sup>41</sup> But I doubt not that you have judged rightly—the sin would be in my letting you—or in your consent—sacrifice your youth to my sick old age— And also there would have been pain and anger caused to many—to one, Mrs Severn—to whom I have many times owed life—

Be it as you have judged—and do not fear that I think your love less—nor that mine will be, while I am here to give it you. I cannot write more today. Your letters will always be safe addressed here—but I may have to go on to Venice—so that you must not wonder if there is delay in answer to the next

Ever, my Kathleen

your loving & devoted servant

J Ruskin

I think it best to send this straight to your home—

*Ironically enough it was only after reading this letter that I learnt from the wife of an artist friend of mine the circumstances connected with Ruskin's early divorce. The information came as a relief to me. With this knowledge and despite my parents' absolute prohibition, I would happily have accepted his proposal and been a wife to him. But, even then, I discovered, the way would not have been*

entirely easy. My local clergyman, to whom I had been devoted, told me that he could not have married us as Mr. Ruskin was a divorced person. He went on to imply that I could have been his housekeeper—a statement which enraged my parents so much that they left the church.

Soon after this I went to my friends in Gloucestershire as had been planned, and the security of my address in Painswick gave me courage to write to Ruskin again. For the last time I received a letter in reply, enclosing also one from Sorella that has since been lost.

Fluelen, Switz<sup>d</sup>.

Sat<sup>y</sup> 27th Oct

My Kathleen

I have only this aft<sup>n</sup> and too late to answer by to-days post—your precious letter of the 21st and how to answer I know not—for I became gradually ill at Rezzorico with a form of the old despondency—embittered by the sense of all the pain you were suffering—for my sake—and by all kinds of fear—for us both—nor has the gloom relaxed, but deepened from that day—

I will not write now under its influence except with the one solemn word of infinite gratitude for what you have been to me—and would have been—and would still be—if Life—or Death—permitted—I am coming nearer you, a line to Dijon, in answer to this, would be safe—but what answer can it have Miss Alexanders address at Florence 21 Piazza S<sup>ta</sup> Maria Novella is always safe—the enclosed line from

her reads formal—but it is not—the pain she is in about both of us is very great

I cannot write more today—only trust that I love you, and have loved—far more than you ever knew—or thought—& *am*

Ever your devoted

J Ruskin

“cause to be impatient” with—you, Kathleen?—You are the heavenliest creature in your love and patience with me, and worth—all the life I have lived—had I it yet to dedicate to you.

*I was too heart-broken to read any of his books again, but Ruskin's memory was not easily effaced. From Gloucestershire I wrote to my sister, and also received a formal letter from my parents in my father's handwriting. Until this time my father had never so much as mentioned Ruskin's name to me; all discussion was conducted by my mother.*

Gwynfa.

Painswick.

Oct. 18<sup>th</sup> 88.

My dear Mary,

I was very glad to get your letter, we have been out sketching all day—and yesterday afternoon as well. Papa and Mamma must be very glad to find Miss Alexander agrees with them as far as thinking the same as to my living as a daughter with Mr. Ruskin. You ask me if I feel decided about anything—yes—I do feel at present that—*very decidedly*—

that God's will is that I should be to Mr. Ruskin what he wants—that is for him to have a right over me—but as Mrs. Lucas told me, I could not be anything else but as a daughter in any case—in that view of the matter, and the other view that he was not really married to anyone else—of course there is no wrong whatever—and I think, at least I feel that this has come to me—for me to do—for my motives are entirely pure, they are not for self—nor for money, nor for any idea of this world's glory—say what people will—say what Papa & Mamma will—it is entirely for good's sake—Mamma said if he were a poor man I would have nothing to do with him—such is perfectly false—if he were poor & *what he is*, I should feel *utterly* the same. I know perfectly that it is a tremendously hard thing to ask Papa & Mamma—for he is very old and I am very young, as far as some things are concerned. And I never wished—nor do I wish for marrying anybody for its own sake—but I feel now—like it or not like it—I am called upon to do it. Nothing good in the world has ever been done, but what great troubles have had to be overcome first, and the world defied for a time—until it too sees the wisdom & then gives its worthless approval. But the world cannot harm me—but a duty left undone can harm me & others through my life being spoiled—harm Mr. Ruskin—and hundreds will (I might easily say more) be influenced by his dying in Faith or Despair. These great men are leaned on by the people,—if they have found & uttered such truths concerning

everyday matters—if on great matters their minds are uncertain—then poor weak—weaker minds are unhinged—unsettled. And besides surely it is goodness—not evil—to make anybody happy, even for a little time—especially after such a life of trouble & misfortune— And according to the Bible there would be no evil to be done first before the good could be arrived at.

*[The rest of this letter is lost, but the following is added round the margin of the existing sheet.]*

There was a question with Mamma as to who is our neighbour in life— Well Christ answers that pretty plainly in the Parable of the Samaritan—he had to go out of the beaten track to help someone—of course the Levite would'nt—he was too good—although all of them were on their way to Jerusalem = Heaven. and Mr. R. pretty plainly came in my path & asks my help—which I feel I can give him— young silly & everything else that I am.

The Bungalow  
164 Avenue Road.  
Acton

Dear Kathleen,

After you have written to all your friends, I suppose I should thank you for your letter. Mary has taken upon herself the liberty of concealing letters which she has received from you, but on receipt of your last this morning, she *allowed* me to read it as you wished.

You say that you will abide by what I say, and that being so, I have only to reiterate my former decision, and that is you must have nothing to do with the old man.

On carefully reading his last batch of letters to you, I find that Mr Ruskin has acted a most dishonourable part, in that he has completely broken faith with us (your Father and myself) by introducing sentiment (and of a most objectinial [*sic*] kind to a young girl) into his letters to you, being quite irrelevant to the purpose of art studies: or in other words, has incited you to deceive & become disobedient, which you are, much beyond what I could ever imagine.

Therefore your Father & I have decided that you are to send us Mr Ruskin's present address, and we will deal with him, prompted by the most sincere interest in your welfare, according to our knowledge and experience of the world, which your young ideas and meagre experience prevents you from properly understanding. This fact is instanced by your very silly remarks about what you think of the world.

We therefore forbid you to correspond any further with Mr Ruskin.

It seems very strange that you should consider it your duty—and your sacred duty too—to pander to this old man's wishes, to the detriment, destruction, and peace and disgrace of your parents. If this is what you think your Bible has taught you, we fear that you have read between the lines.



Believe us to be as ever your affectionate & loving  
parents—

M. E. Olander  
Edmund Olander

*Afterwards, despite my parents' prohibition, I often wrote to Ruskin at Brantwood, but I believe that all my letters were intercepted by Mrs. Severn.*

*Some years later my mother, sister and I went to Keswick and Ambleside for a holiday. One day, to my surprise, my mother herself suggested that we should take a carriage and go to Coniston. On arrival she did not get out, but my sister and I walked round the lake. Half-way Mary stopped and waited for me, while I went on to Brantwood.*

*I was exceedingly nervous of meeting Mrs. Severn, and went round to the back door where I handed my card to a butler, asking him to give it to Mr. Ruskin, and requesting that he should see me. I do not believe the card reached Ruskin, for the butler returned with the answer, 'Not today.'*

*I then went round to the other side of the house and saw Ruskin at the first French window, sitting alone. But I was too alarmed to stay, for I was in full view of the next French window, where people were evidently dining.*

*I kissed my hand to him, but he never saw me. Nor did we ever meet again.*

*The newspapers told me of his death, and it saddened me to think that I should never more see him in this world. I grieved particularly lest I might have added to his sorrows by failing to act as he would have wished, and dashing*

*his hopes and plans for our happiness together. My greatest consolation was to learn from the report of Canon Scott Holland, who was at Ruskin's bedside near the end, that he had asked for the hymn, 'Peace, perfect peace,' that I had copied out and sent him twelve years before.*

*I hope and believe he found such peace in a renewed awareness of the love of God, during his last quiet years.*

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> The Rev. Stopford Brooke, *Notes on the Liber Studiorum of J. M. W. Turner, R.A.* (London, 1885).

<sup>2</sup> Turner's will reads, "I direct that the said pictures, or paintings (*Dido building Carthage* and *The Sun rising in a Mist*), shall be hung, kept, and placed, that is to say, always between the two pictures painted by Claude, *The Seaport* and *The Mill*" (*Works*, XII, p. 408n). No such conditions were stipulated in the decree of Chancery by which the National Gallery eventually came into possession of the Turners in 1856, and at the time of writing the paintings are separated. Nevertheless they are still held at the National Gallery in the hope that, when space permits, it may be possible to hang them again as Turner wished.

The "flounders and haddocks" of the following letter refer to the foreground of *The Sun rising in a Mist*. *The Shipwreck*, another picture in the Turner bequest, is now hung in the Tate Gallery.

<sup>3</sup> "The interest of a landscape consists wholly in its relation either to figures present—or to figures past—or to human powers conceived" (*Works*, XXII, p. 14). This subject was much in Ruskin's thoughts. On December 6, 1884, in his last professorial lecture at Oxford, he promised in the spring to treat "the general relations and dignities of landscape and figure-painting," but Ruskin had resigned before the lecture was given (*Works*, XXXIII, p. 533).

<sup>4</sup> Ruskin's teaching of Kathleen Olander follows closely the principles he laid down in *The Elements of Drawing* and *The Laws of Fésole*. He strongly disagreed with public art schools "forbidding accuracy of measurement" (*Works*, XV, pp. 38 and 342) and encouraged his pupils to use mechanical aids. Two lessons later, in *The Elements of Drawing*, he recommends taking "any narrow space of evening sky . . . and try to gradate a little space of white paper as evenly as that is gradated" (*Works*, XV, p. 35).

<sup>5</sup> Kathleen's father, Edmund Olander, was a Civil Engineer, and worked for the Great Western Railway at Paddington.

<sup>6</sup> Ruskin was true to his word, and wrote that same day to Bernard Quaritch, "I want a pretty early Bible for a girl—and don't in the least know where to find even an honest old one of thirty years ago,—with apocrypha and maps. I want something a little pretty, or at least dignified,—outside—but she's the one that will read the inside—and it must be in good clear print. If you have another small Charles First one!—I would give it her at any rate—for the present. She comes of age on New Year's Day—and I must do the prettiest and best I can for her." Quaritch sent a modern Bible which "didn't do at all"; eventually, on January 20, 1888, Ruskin wrote, "I got a modern Bible for the gift I wanted," but from another source [Charlotte Quaritch Wrentmore, ed., *Letters of John Ruskin to Bernard Quaritch, 1867-1888* (London, 1938), pp. 105-6].

<sup>7</sup> The niece of Ruskin's old friend and neighbour at Denmark Hill, Edmund Oldfield (*Praeterita*, II, 8; *Works*, XXXV, pp. 381-4).

<sup>8</sup> Rose La Touche (Preface to 1871 ed. of *Sesame and Lilies*. *Works*, XVIII, p. 47).

<sup>9</sup> Ruskin met Lilius Trotter in Venice in 1876, gave her some instruction and kept a continuing interest in her progress as an artist. He speaks highly of her in a lecture in 1883, "The Art of England" (*Works*, XXXIII, pp. 278-80). In a letter to H.R.H. the Duchess of Albany on February 23, 1886, he describes her as "my best of pupils" (*Works*, XXXVII, p. 554).

<sup>10</sup> Kate Greenaway's *Almanacks* were small, shilling booklets, characteristically illustrated, some of the pages of which have floral borders. Ruskin thought the *Almanack for 1883* was a "lovely little book—all through" (*Works*, XXXVII, p. 427), though he was not uncritical of the illustrations for 1885.

<sup>11</sup> Samuel Prout (1783-1852). Ruskin had the greatest admiration for his friend Prout. "There is no stone drawing, no vitality of architecture like Prout's. . . . His lithographic work . . . which was, I believe, the first of the kind, still remains the most valuable of all" (*Modern Painters*, II, 1, 7; *Works*, III, p. 217). Again in *The Elements of Drawing*, he expresses his praise. "All his published lithographic sketches are of the greatest value, wholly unrivalled in power of composition, and in love and feeling of architectural subject" (*Works*, XV, p. 221).

<sup>12</sup> Ruskin's reference is to a sketch of Antwerp made by Kathleen some time previously, when on holiday, and now submitted to Ruskin

for criticism. For some reason it was never returned. (See Ruskin's teasing reference on p. 58.)

<sup>13</sup> George Fennel Robson (1790–1833). In *Modern Painters*, II, 1, 7, Ruskin writes, "I have been myself indebted for much teaching and more delight to those (*paintings*) of the late G. Robson. Weaknesses there are in them manifold . . . but there is thorough affection for the thing drawn" (*Works*, III, p. 193). In the sixth lecture of *The Art of England* he tells how Robson "dwells with a monotony of affection on the clear repose of the northern twilight, and on the gathering of the shadow in the mountain gorges, till all their forms were folded in one kingly shroud of purple death" (*Works*, XXXIII, p. 384).

<sup>14</sup> John vi, 63, and Proverbs iv, 23.

<sup>15</sup> Bishop Edward Henry Bickersteth (1825–1906). "Peace, perfect peace" was composed in 1875. John Keble (1792–1866). "A living stream" was first published in 1857. *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (Historical Edition, London, 1909), Nos. 620 and 358.

<sup>16</sup> In the ninth chapter, "Of Map Drawing," of *The Laws of Fésole*, Ruskin mentions that the eleventh chapter will be devoted to the subject of map projection; but the book as published contains only ten chapters, the eleventh never having been issued.

<sup>17</sup> A mixture of Luke iii, 17, and Deuteronomy iv, 24.

<sup>18</sup> Writing to *The Times* on April 14, 1886, Ruskin declared "The Kensington Water-Colour Gallery is still one of the most delightful and instructive rooms in London; and the most delicate and precious drawing it contains [*is*] Turner's 'Hornby Castle from Tatham Church'" (*Works*, XIII, p. 590). In 1867, when lecturing "On the Present state of Modern Art" (*Works*, XIX, pp. 224–5), Ruskin said about the same picture, "Put that in a small room by itself, and draw the student's attention to it as a wholly precious thing, and it will teach all water-colour drawing from beginning to end; and in subject—all tree drawing, all mountain drawing, all principles of light, shade, and colour—you want nothing more than that one work."

<sup>19</sup> The Annual Exhibition of The Royal Society of Painters in Water-Colour, familiarly known as the Old Water-Colour Society.

<sup>20</sup> Ruskin had met the young American artist, Francesca Alexander and her mother at Florence in 1882, and was immediately impressed with their "vivid goodness and innocence" (*Life*, II, p. 464). He assisted Miss Alexander in publishing her collections of Tuscan legends and song, and their friendship continued, stimulated by a constant exchange of letters between "Sorella" and her "Fratello."

<sup>21</sup> This same day Ruskin wrote to Mrs. Severn and to another friend in the same vein. Robert Browning and Jean Ingelow were amongst those who had greeted him, and undoubtedly the reception he had been given pleased him. "They can't make my skin into gloves yet," he wrote (*Life*, II, p. 516).

<sup>22</sup> Edwige Gualtieri, Francesca Alexander's "trustful, but tenderly corrective" servant (*Works*, XXXII, p. 101).

<sup>23</sup> George Allen published the first volume of *Christ's Folk in the Apennine*, Francesca Alexander's "reminiscences of her friends among the Tuscan Peasantry," in 1887. Later in this correspondence we hear of Ruskin at work in Beauvais on the seventh part, which was all that was ever completed of Volume II.

<sup>24</sup> Thomas Faed, R.A. (1826-1900). Ruskin seldom mentions Faed, and never with enthusiasm. In his *Academy Notes* he comments on certain individual pictures, and sums the artist up as not possessing "any first-rate qualities; but has no serious faults, and much gentle pathos" (*Works*, XIV, p. 224).

<sup>25</sup> A book that was never written. Doubtless many of the principles Ruskin had in mind were contained in the second lecture of *Sesame and Lilies*, "Of Queens' Gardens" (*Works*, XVIII, pp. 109-44).

<sup>26</sup> Ruskin's departure for France on June 10th, under the care of Arthur Severn, was kept very secret. Sydney Cockerell, with whom he was in correspondence at this time, was unaware of his departure, and met him by chance a fortnight later in Abbeville.

<sup>27</sup> 2 Corinthians vi, 1.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Ruskin wrote to Mrs. Severn on July 13, 1888, thanking her for "the delightful baby talk letter" (*Works*, XXXVII, p. 606).

<sup>29</sup> In fact there had been two young men, Detmar Blow and Sydney Carlyle Cockerell, who had met Ruskin at Abbeville and whose company the older man greatly enjoyed. Their friendship had become so well established that after first Arthur Severn, and later Cockerell, had returned to England, Blow escorted Ruskin on the rest of the tour. We hear of him sketching with Ruskin in the Jura, and picking gentians above Merligen on the return trip in November (*Life*, II, pp. 525-7).

The work upon which they were engaged at Beauvais was familiar to Ruskin, who had often admired that "great type of simple and masculine buttress structure, the apse of Beauvais" (*Works*, IX, p. 206, and VIII, p. 62).



<sup>30</sup> William Oldham, with whom Ruskin was on friendly terms, was curator of the Turner Water-Colour Room at the National Gallery.

<sup>31</sup> To prevent his pupils using oil paints too early was one of Ruskin's greatest difficulties. Only a month before he had written in the same tone to Sorella, telling her, "you must not think of oil painting. I have told you so before. You would attract every common and ignorant person about you and lose all your own essential gifts" [Lucia Gray Swett, *John Ruskin's Letters to Francesca and Memoirs of the Alexanders* (Boston, 1931), p. 174]. Ruskin's objection to oil painting was that "it seems to me not only adverse to, but even to negative, partially, beautiful landscape effect" (*Works*, XXXVII, p. 212). Naturally his protest was only against the premature or wrong use of oils, not against the medium itself.

<sup>32</sup> I Timothy vi, 12, and John vi, 68.

<sup>33</sup> In Sir Walter Scott's *The Monastery* the girdle worn by the White Lady diminished in substance and strength as the greatness of the House of Avenel decreased.

"Look on my girdle—on this thread of gold—

'Tis fine as web of lightest gossamer." (Chapter XVII.)

In the final chapter, "her golden zone . . . was now diminished to the fineness of a silken thread."

*The Monastery* was Ruskin's favourite book as a child (*Works*, V, p. 366), and is often referred to in his writings. He uses the simile of the girdle to describe the thinning away of pier bases in *The Stones of Venice* (*Works*, IX, p. 101).

<sup>34</sup> Hebrews ii, 18. Rose la Touche was much in Ruskin's mind at this time, for he was engaged in writing the last chapter but one of *Praeterita*, which tells of the course of his affection for her. He was in high spirits at Sallanches, with no trace of depression. "Life given back to me," he told Mrs. Severn this same day (*Life*, II, p. 526).

Kathleen's own text had been the first verse of Psalm 121.

<sup>35</sup> The Sainte Chapelle in Paris was built under the direction of St. Louis between 1245-8 to house the Crown of Thorns and a fragment of the True Cross that he had acquired. In the upper of the two chapels St. Louis is now buried. Ruskin must have known and venerated this supreme triumph of Gothic architecture, though the purpose of his question is not plain.

<sup>36</sup> John ix, 4.

<sup>37</sup> After "a night of perfect rest," Ruskin noted in his diary of



this date, "in the perfected light of Mont Blanc, after being at Mass," the last words of *Modern Painters* were written (*Life*, II, p. 526). The passage he sent to Kathleen Olander is substantially the same as that in the printed version we read today.

The theory of Art of which the elements were thus stated in practically the opening sentence of the first volume of *Modern Painters*, was first expanded and then concentrated into the aphorism given twenty years afterwards in my inaugural Oxford lectures, "All great Art is Praise" and on that aphorism, the yet bolder saying founded,—“so far from Art’s being immoral, in the ultimate power of it, Nothing but Art is Moral; Life without Industry is sin, and Industry without art, brutality”—(I forget the words, but that is their purport.): and now in writing beneath the cloudless peace of the snows of Chamouni, what must be the really final words of the book which their beauty inspired and their strength guided I am able with yet happier and calmer heart than ever heretofore to enforce its simplest assurance of Faith, that the Knowledge of what is Beautiful leads on, and is the first step to the Knowledge of the things which are lovely and of good report: and that the laws, the life, and the joy of Beauty in the Material world of God, are as eternal and sacred parts of His Creation, as in the World of Spirits, Virtue, and in the World of Angels, Praise (cf. *Works*, VII, pp. 463–4).

<sup>38</sup> *Works*, VII, pp. 461–4. "The horror and shame of the false Evangelical Religion is in its recommending its souls to God, not for their humility, but their sin! Not because they cast their crowns before God's throne, but because they strew His earth with their ashes."

<sup>39</sup> The "friend in Gloucestershire" with whom Kathleen stayed in October (*vide* p. 81).

<sup>40</sup> Not strictly true, if we are to believe the report of the burning of Ruskin's love-letters to Rosie after his death at Brantwood (*Works*, XXXV, p. lxxvi).

<sup>41</sup> Euphemia Chalmers Gray (1828–97). "Effie" Gray's marriage to John Ruskin in 1848 was annulled in 1854. Subsequently she married Ruskin's friend, the painter John Everett Millais.

A select, chronological list of Ruskin's most important works, particularly those mentioned in this book:

- 1843 MODERN PAINTERS Vol I
- 1846 MODERN PAINTERS Vol II
- 1849 THE SEVEN LAMPS OF ARCHITECTURE
- 1851-3 THE STONES OF VENICE
- 1855-9 NOTES ON THE ROYAL ACADEMY
- 1856 MODERN PAINTERS Vols III and IV
- 1857 THE ELEMENTS OF DRAWING
- 1860 MODERN PAINTERS Vol V
- 1862 UNTO THIS LAST
- 1865 SESAME AND LILIES
- 1866 THE CROWN OF WILD OLIVE  
THE ETHICS OF THE DUST
- 1871-84 FORS CLAVIGERA
- 1872 MUNERA PULVERIS
- 1875-7 MORNINGS IN FLORENCE
- 1877-9 THE LAWS OF FÉSOLE
- 1880-5 THE BIBLE OF AMIENS
- 1883-4 THE ART OF ENGLAND
- 1884-5 THE PLEASURES OF ENGLAND  
(ed.) ROADSIDE SONGS OF TUSCANY
- 1885-9 PRAETERITA
- 1887-9 (ed.) CHRIST'S FOLK IN THE APENNINE
- 1888 MODERN PAINTERS, EPILOGUE



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